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London
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THE CONTROVERSY OF FAITH.

ADVICE

TO

CANDIDATES FOR HOLY ORDERS

ON THE CASE OF

GORHAM *v.* THE BISHOP OF EXETER:

CONTAINING

AN ANALYSIS AND EXPOSITION OF THE ARGUMENT BY WHICH
THE LITERAL INTERPRETATION OF THE BAPTISMAL
SERVICES IS TO BE VINDICATED.

BY THE REV. CHARLES DODGSON, M.A.,

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AND EXAMINING-CHAPLAIN TO THE LORD BISHOP OF RIPON.

*Double First Class at Oxford in 1821, & translator of
Tertullian in the Library of the Fathers —*

“ Utinam res theologicas et quæstiones de fide Christianâ, non ex studiis partium,
et privatis opinionibus aut affectibus; sed *ex certo verbo Dei, et consensu veteris
Ecclesiæ*, tractaremus et definiremus: majorem spem concordiæ simul et *veritatis
Evangelicæ* teneremus.” — BISHOP OVERALL.

LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

1850.

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THE
CONTROVERSY OF FAITH.

IT is not without much diffidence and hesitation that I address thus publicly a body of men, which I cannot but regard, at the present time, as one of the most important, for good or for evil, to be found within the Church of England. They have reached the threshold of the Holy Office, for which they are designed, at the very moment of an important crisis,—one of the most important, certainly, which have arisen in the Church since the days of her Reformation. The two great principles, which have since that period stood in perpetual opposition to each other—Liberty of Opinion and Unity of Faith—which have formed the line of demarcation between the Dissenter and the Churchman, and have ever found a debateable border-ground within the Church itself, have now, upon that ground, been forced by circumstances into something like an open and regular conflict, each claiming alike the principles and the acts of the Reformed Church for its support. The spiritual and temporal elements, which compose our

Church Establishment—the one represented by the formal sentence of a Bishop, the other by that of a Court of Law under the supreme authority of the Crown—each in the independent exercise of its own legitimate power, are here arrayed on the opposite sides of the contest. Church discipline and Church doctrine, legal rights and Christian obligations, are complicated together in strange discord and confusion: while the eyes of many are anxiously fixed on the great vital issue, perhaps not remotely imperilled in the struggle—the integrity of the English Church as a Divine Ordinance, as a branch of that One Catholic and Apostolic Body, which is “a witness and a keeper of Holy Writ,” “the pillar and ground of the truth.”

There are many who have from the first condemned and deplored the recent judicial proceedings in the case of Mr. Gorham, as resuscitating the violence of a worn-out controversy, and disturbing the peace of the Church. The sentiment is an amiable one, but unwarranted by the facts of the case. The controversy on the subject of Baptism had been for a long previous period in a course of revival and growth, rather than of extinction. And while it was not only sowing dissensions between pastors and their flocks, and amongst the members of those flocks, but arraying even the Teachers of Truth against each other, pulpit against pulpit, and man against man, we might well indeed have inquired, “Is it peace?” The late proceedings did not cause us to exchange peace for war, but only one mode of warfare for another infinitely less offensive. They found men carrying on the controversy in every way which could be imagined the most unprofitable and the most unfair. Loose and indefinite notions ventilated in

ordinary conversation, partial and disjointed discussions of detached portions of the subject, the anonymous dogmatism of the periodical press, shallow sophisms and ignorant mistakes, unjust charges and offensive personalities,—all these thrown together into one common undigested mass, perplexing, misleading, irritating the minds of men. They gave us instead a full, precise, patient, and deliberate investigation, carefully conducted and scrupulously watched on either side, and carried on with the seriousness, the temper, and the courtesy, which befitted so grave an occasion and so sacred a subject. And when the alternatives are compared, few, I imagine, would hesitate in deciding which of the two was the most calculated to advance the cause of peace as well as of truth. That many of the evils which I have enumerated have not been, by this means, every where abated, may, with I fear too much truth, be averred. Men there unhappily are, and always will be, who prefer the excitement of a quarrel to the dull task of a sober disputation. But quiet and thoughtful minds have gained much by the change of circumstances. Instead of throwing aside the subject in hopeless bewilderment and disgust, they have now something substantial and trustworthy to turn to. The whole controversy, in its length, breadth, and depth, is before them. They can compare the principles, weigh the contending proofs, and measure the arguments of either party against those of the other. Nor is this all. The course of this investigation has elicited many avowals and concessions, which have not only served to disabuse the minds of ignorant men as to the real subject of the controversy, and the relative positions of the parties engaged in it, but to remove also much misunderstanding between the

parties themselves. We shall no longer, it may be hoped, hear of those literal interpretations of our Formularies, which, having been explained on the one side, have been admitted by the other to be at least fairly within the scope of the language of the Church, entitled "Popish figments" and "soul-destroying heresies." We shall no longer hear men professing that they "deny "Baptismal Regeneration,"—and on that ground claimed by schismatics and heretics as making common cause with themselves,—who have been anxious to declare that they hold, in some legitimate sense of the words, that persons duly baptized are "by baptism regenerate." Men have been brought to observe more carefully than before the precise language which the Church has prescribed: and thus the limits of the controversy have been more accurately defined, and the real point at issue between Churchmen disentangled from many views, which belong only to Dissenters, and which, it is admitted, no Churchman can hold, without forfeiting his proper and distinctive character.

Yet it must be confessed that a great impulse has been given to the passions as well as to the energies of both parties; and that as the field has been narrowed, the contest has become more close and active: and the manner in which those of our younger brethren, who are about to enter the Ministry, are preparing to bear themselves in the present crisis, cannot, as I have said, be otherwise than highly important to the Church as well as to themselves. Many different counsels will be suggested to them by men of different sentiments: but there is one, at least, which all must concur in offering them,—that they seek not to enter on that Holy Office without having carefully and deliberately studied, in all

its details and in all its bearings, the question which is thus agitating the Church. Such counsel is, indeed, but an act of simple kindness to themselves. A young man can form no adequate notion, without experience, of the trammels and difficulties, in which he will otherwise find himself speedily involved. He carries, perhaps, into the new scene of his Parish, some crude, vague notion on the controverted doctrine, adopted hastily and without examination, but which at once approves itself to the tastes of some party among his hearers, and, under the influence of that approval, soon moulds itself into an exact conformity with their views. Beguiled by this harmony of sentiment, and soothed by the thought that he is leading others, while he is himself being unconsciously led by them, he becomes more determined in maintaining, more earnest in advocating, the favourite tenet, and mistakes the mere influence of habit on his mind for the strength of a conscientious conviction. At length something leads him to inquire into the whole subject of the existing controversy; and then, perhaps, he finds that he has been pertinaciously defending views, which contradict the convictions of his better instructed judgment. And here commence the miseries of his position. The task of recantation ever requires an effort, a sacrifice, a victory over the natural pride of the heart; but in no case more so than in that of the preacher, who knows that it will alienate an admiring congregation, and force him to desert a religious party. I do not, of course, intend to represent such considerations as being otherwise than most alien from the character of the high office which a clergyman bears. I speak merely of evils which are known practically to exist; of things as they too often *are*, not as they *ought*

to be. But even if the young Pastor have the courage to meet these consequences, he can never escape the reproach, distressing in proportion to its perfect truth and justice, that that man deserves to forfeit the confidence of his hearers, who enters on the office of instructing them before he has duly instructed himself.

I should not, however, have ventured thus to counsel those whom I am addressing, nor even to address them at all, as I am about to do, were it not that Providence has allotted to me a post in the Church, which brings me into immediate connection with themselves, and gives me a familiar acquaintance with, and a kindly interest in, the peculiar circumstances of their position. The office of Examining Chaplain, which I have held for more than thirteen years, and still hold, in one of our largest Dioceses, has afforded me much opportunity of becoming acquainted with the various doubts and perplexities, to which young men of thoughtful minds are liable on points of theological doctrine, and of tracing them to their true sources. On such occasions, I have frequently been able, by correcting some mistake as to facts, by removing some misapprehension, by offering some suggestion, or by setting before them some argument, with which my own reading and reflection during a long period of pastoral experience has furnished me, to give to a younger brother a clearer view and a steadier hold of some important point in the system of Ministerial Teaching.

On no subject have I found such a course more needful or more beneficial than on that of the great controversy of the present day,—the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration. And, as I have reason to believe that those with whom I have so dealt have received my sug-

gestions in the same spirit of kindness in which they were intended, I have thought it might not be unprofitable, at the present critical time, to present in a connected form, to Candidates for Holy Orders in general, the views which I have long been accustomed to express, as occasion called for them, in my official communications with individuals under examination. If I am permitted, under God's blessing, to render in this manner even the least service to His Church, I shall be truly thankful.

I am the more induced to take this step at the present time, in consequence of a misapprehension which seems to have arisen, that the late decision of the Judicial Committee will affect the future examinations for Holy Orders, and that to refuse ordination to a candidate holding the opinions of Mr. Gorham, will henceforth be nothing less than a resistance to the established law. I think it very important that this impression should be as soon as possible removed; and, passing by the higher considerations which the question involves, I will treat it merely on legal and rational grounds; and endeavour to show that, so far from implying a disregard of law, such a course on the part of a Bishop would not even be morally inconsistent with the Judgment which has just been pronounced.

In the first place, then, the question of the fitness of a Candidate for Holy Orders, and that of the right of a presentee to institution, though they may involve the same point of doctrine, are still in themselves distinct questions, and referred, under the sanction of the law, to two separate and independent jurisdictions. With respect to the former, it is important to observe that there is no title to Ordination antecedent to the fitness

of the candidate, which it lies on himself to prove to the Bishop, and of which the Bishop is the only legal judge: whereas, in the other case, the presentation by the lawful patron forms a *primâ facie* title to institution, antecedent to any inquiry as to the fitness of the presentee; and, when the question comes to the final appeal, it lies, not on the clerk to prove his own fitness, but on the Bishop to disprove it.

In fact, the distinction between the two cases may be thus briefly described:—in the case of institution, there are three distinct legal rights to be considered; that of the patron to fill the benefice with his own presentee; that of the presentee to be instituted; and that of the Bishop to refuse institution, on certain legally defined grounds. Each of the two former is controlled and limited by the latter: and since, when a conflict of rights arises, no party may be the judge in his own cause, the patron has the privilege of trying his right against the Bishop by a process called “*Quare impedit*,” in the Common Law Courts, with a final appeal to the House of Lords; the presentee, by a “*duplex querela*” in the Ecclesiastical Court, with a final appeal to the Queen in Council.

On the other hand, in the case of Ordination, there is no legal right conflicting with that of the Bishop to reject the candidate; and he is left to exercise a free discretion, under a higher responsibility than any which human laws can impose or take away.

I state this merely for the purpose of showing that, as the law allows of two distinct and independent jurisdictions, it necessarily contemplates the possibility of two directly opposite decisions on the same point of doctrine, equally valid, equally, for their own purposes,

authoritative. This seems indeed a strange anomaly : but we are only concerned with the fact.

Still it may be said that this proves too much ; since it would be equally an argument for a Bishop's legal right to refuse Ordination for *any* reason, however insufficient, or even without any reason at all : and that he is in fact placed, *in foro conscientiæ*, under a moral obligation to act upon the decision deliberately pronounced by the highest Court in the land. I proceed therefore to show, — still without touching, as I might touch, on higher arguments, — that this conclusion is, on moral and rational grounds also, erroneous ; and this, because the rules and principles, by which the decisions in these two cases of separate jurisdiction are guided, are distinct from, and often opposed to, each other ; so that each decision may be consistent with the principles on which it is founded, and yet the two be contradictory. To place this in a clear light, a few preliminary remarks will be necessary.

The first Reformers of the English Church, as well as those who subsequently took a part in the settlement of our authorized Formularies, must be considered, on all Articles of Faith, as the exponents of two great principles ; first, the rejection of all novelties, whether in the shape of doctrines not directly referred to Scripture as their origin, or in that of interpretations of, and deductions from, Scripture unknown to the primitive Catholic Church ; secondly, the retention of all such Articles of Faith as are immediately referrible to a Scriptural origin, and sanctioned by Catholic authority.

This was the task which belonged to them¹, and which,

¹ " Accessimus autem, quantum maximè potuimus, ad Ecclesiam Apostolorum, et veterum Catholicorum Episcoporum, et Patrum, quam

till proof appear to the contrary, we must presume them to have performed. If, on the one hand, they had, with whatever view, retained or introduced any new doctrine, the mere result of their own private judgment, or, on the other, had purposely excluded any Primitive and Catholic Article of Faith, they would have betrayed and perverted the trust committed to them; and, instead of reforming a Church, would have created a Sect.

Even if there had existed no parties in the Church at the time, and all persons had entirely agreed upon those principles, and on the precise doctrines to be propounded in conformity with them, it would have been, as the Judicial Committee have truly remarked, “perhaps impossible” for the framers of our Formularies “to employ language which did not admit of some latitude of interpretation.” But how greatly was the difficulty of the task increased, when there were, as we know, so many inclined to uncatholic novelties, whether of Romanism or Puritanism, and so many who, to say the least, were disposed to pay but little deference to the authority of primitive antiquity; and when it became important, not only to preserve entire the great principles to which I have referred, but to accommodate the language of the Formularies to the views of contending parties, as far as it was possible to do so without a violation of those principles!

It is to documents framed under such circumstances that both the Bishop, in his examinations for Orders,

scimus adhuc fuisse integram nec tantum doctrinam nostram, sed etiam Sacramenta, precumque publicarum formam, ad illorum ritus et instituta direximus Inde enim putavimus instauracionem petendam esse, unde prima Religionis initia ducta essent.”—Juelli Apologia Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ.

and the Judicial Committee, when called upon to exercise their functions, must alike refer their decisions. And what will be the rules and principles by which such decisions will in each case be guided?

The Judicial Committee shall answer for itself. First, it is not concerned with the question whether the opinions under its consideration are “theologically sound or “unsound;” nor whether “other opinions opposite to “them may or may not be held with equal or even greater “reason.” It is simply a question as to the construction of language, to be determined “by the same rules “which have long been established, and are by the law “applicable to the construction of all written instru- “ments.” Secondly, in this construction, they are to be “assisted only by the consideration of such external or “historical facts, as they may find necessary to enable “them to understand the subject-matter to which the “instruments relate, and the meaning of the words employed;” nor must they be “influenced by the au- “thorities by which the eminent men, who propounded “the Articles and Liturgy, may be supposed to have “been influenced.” And finally, “in all cases, in “which the Articles, considered as a test, admit of dif- “ferent interpretations, it must be held that any sense, “of which the words fairly admit, may be allowed, if “that sense be not contradictory to something which “the Church has elsewhere allowed or required.”

Now let us observe how these rules must work in arriving at the final decision.

The form of the language employed in our authorised documents may, from the mere “impossibility” of framing it otherwise, admit of two directly opposite interpretations. Of these, the one may be theologically

sound, the other unsound ; but the Court has no concern with that question. The one may be historically demonstrated to be Primitive and Catholic, the other unknown to the first ages of the Church ; but the Court may not be assisted by such external and historical facts. And, even if they believed that the framers were guided at the time by the authority of the Primitive Church, the Court must not be “ influenced by the authorities, “ by which *they* may be supposed to have been influenced.” Finally, the Uncatholic interpretation may be more forced and less probable, even according to the rules of verbal construction, than the Catholic one ; but the Court, in inquiring into its admissibility, has not to decide the question whether another opinion opposite to it may or may not be held *with greater reason*. If both be admissible as grammatical interpretations, both must be pronounced to be doctrines allowed by the Church.

Startling as this result may be, it is not so startling as that which lies but one step beyond it ; namely, that on every point, on which the language of the Church admits, by legal construction, of two possible opposite meanings, she must be considered as not intending to teach *any doctrine at all*. And this conclusion is virtually declared also by the Court in its judgment. “ If there be any doctrine, on which the Articles are “ silent, or ambiguously expressed, so as to be capable “ of two meanings,” and if, also, “ the expressions “ used in the Rubrics and Formularies are ambiguous, “ we must suppose that it was intended to leave that “ doctrine to private judgment.”

Here, then, it is first declared to have been, under the circumstances of the case, “ perhaps impossible,

“ even if it had been thought desirable, to employ language which did not admit of some latitude of interpretation :” and next, that *because* such ambiguity is found, it must be supposed to have been *intended*.

If the principles thus laid down by this Court, as directing and controlling their decisions, may be considered, as well they may, to afford but slender security for the conservation of Catholic Truth in our Church, much comfort to Churchmen must needs arise from the fact, which I next propose to notice, namely, that our Bishops, in the exercise of their proper independent functions, must be presumed to take other and very different principles for their guidance. Can a Bishop, in inquiring into the fitness of a candidate for Holy Orders, be indifferent to the question whether his opinions are “theologically sound or unsound?” If the same words seem to admit of two different interpretations, can a Bishop exclude from his consideration all those “external and historical facts,” which may “assist” him in determining which of the two is Primitive and Catholic? And viewing, as he is bound to view, the framers of our Formularies as exponents of Catholic doctrine, not of private opinions, can *he* refuse to be “influenced by the authorities by which they may be supposed to have been influenced?” And if at length it clearly appears that the one interpretation is ancient and Catholic, and the other comparatively novel, can the Bishop of a Church, which has cast out Romish novelties, not because they are Romish, but because they are novelties, consent to place the two upon the same footing, and thus virtually to declare that the Church holds *no* doctrine on the point in question?

Here, then, is a clear distinction between the legal

functions of a Court, as defined by itself, and the duties which a clergyman, whether Bishop, Priest, or Deacon, owes to the Church, as a Divine Institution. And that this distinction is entirely recognised by public opinion, we have seen remarkably proved in our own times. Whatever differences of opinion there may be upon the Judgment which has been recently pronounced, no one has dreamed of impugning the honesty of the eminent men who pronounced it. But when, a few years since, the publication of the 90th Tract for the Times gave men reason to suppose that *clergymen*—whose province it was not to seek out the limits of legal licence and impunity in the holding of opinions, but “by manifestation of the truth to commend themselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God”—were attempting to apply the very same principle of a mere legal construction to our doctrinal Formularies, the bare supposition of such an attempt was met by an almost universal outcry of indignation.

Adverting, then, to the two separate jurisdictions of which I have been speaking—that of the Bishop in his examinations for Orders, and that of the Court of Appeal in such cases as are brought before it,—I repeat, that the very fact that principles, which are recognised as the basis of the decision in the one case, are avowedly excluded from the other, renders it not only possible but highly probable that the two decisions may be adverse to each other: even as it frequently happens in a Court of Justice that the verdict must necessarily be for the one party, if certain evidence be let in, and for the other, if it be shut out. Hence it is clear, that neither decision can, in any sense, be held to overrule

the other; and that therefore, on moral and rational, no less than on strictly legal grounds, the discretion vested in a Bishop with respect to the admission of candidates to Ordination, must be considered as in no respect fettered by the Judgment, which has been pronounced regarding the institution of Mr. Gorham.

I have dwelt thus largely on this point, because it is one of special interest to myself, as well as to those whom I am immediately addressing. I now turn to the subject of the controversy itself.

And here, on the very threshold of the inquiry, we are met by a plausible statement, of which it is important at once to expose the fallacy. It is said that the Judicial Committee have not decided, but have studiously left undecided, the point of doctrine involved in the case before them; that their judgment is but a grant of toleration to both parties; and that the spirit of toleration is the spirit of charity.

To the first of these assertions the answer is a brief one. "Not to decide," says Lord Bacon, "is to decide." The real point at issue is whether the spiritual grace of Baptism is so necessary a part of the essence of the Sacrament, that it always accompanies its due administration, unless where it is withheld by God himself on account of wilful unbelief and actual unrepented sin. The Court has *decided* that the Church allows this to be *questionable*: it has decided, therefore, that she does not, as a Church, *hold* it to be *true*. And this decision involves directly the question of her integrity as a branch of the Catholic Church, supposing the doctrine in question to be Catholic; although, not being declared by her own authority, it cannot, in any case, really vitiate her character in that respect. This ques-

tion, however, although of the most vital importance as affecting our Church, and therefore of the most anxious interest to all her sons and servants, is one of those, which, as we have seen, the Court avowedly excluded from its consideration.

With respect to the charity of toleration, I would simply say that, whatever view Schismatics, who can pretend to no mission from above, may take of their own duties and responsibilities, the Church must know, and especially we who are her Ministers must know, that the precious deposit of Catholic Truth has been committed, not to our will as lords, but to our trust as stewards. The treasure is our Master's; we may not deal with it as though it were our own. In one of His own parables, He has set before us the case of one who did so. That steward relieved his lord's debtors, not by the use of his own, but by the misuse of his lord's property. He won, doubtless, their favour; and he made to himself friends; and he was received into their houses; and he was "commended," even by his worldly-minded master, "because he had done wisely:" but He, who caused this parable to be written for our learning, calls him simply "unjust." So is it with us. When we are called upon to "tolerate" any proposed interpretation of the doctrinal statements deduced by our Church from Scripture, the only question really before us is, whether it agree or disagree with the teaching of the *Catholic Church*. If it agree, we are bound, not to "tolerate," but to maintain and teach it; if it disagree, we are bound to "banish and drive" it away, as "erroneous," and "strange," and "contrary to God's Word,"¹ since Catholic Teaching is but

¹ Ordination Service.

the mirror in which the light of God's Word is faithfully reflected. In both these cases it is simply duty to our Divine Master, not charity towards our fellow-servants, which is called into exercise. If we desire to show charity towards those, whom, in our conscience, we believe to be in error, we have abundant ways open to us for doing so. Let us abstain from "railing accusations;" let us "put away from us all bitterness, and "wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, with "all malice." Let us give them such things as are our own to give,—our instructions, our counsels, our prayers. But let us not give them that which is another's; let us not, to win their love, desert our own trust, and surrender to them that which our Master has charged us to keep safely. These remarks on the charity of toleration are irrespective of the question on which side of the present controversy the truth lies.

The question, then, with which we have to deal, is not one of charity, but of truth; and, as it turns on an inquiry into the doctrine of the Church of England respecting it, it is important to notice, as furnishing the key to the controversy, the different principles, which different parties have taken as the basis of that inquiry.

First, there is the *Legal principle*, as defined and laid down by the Judicial Committee, which, as it avowedly excludes all reference to Divine Revelation, to Catholic Teaching, and to Theological Opinion of whatever age, cannot, of course, as I have already observed, be recognised by the Church in her corporate capacity, or by her Clergy in their especial office, as the proper rule of interpreting her doctrine.

Next, there is what has been not unaptly termed the

Is it not a railing accusation to call your opponents

Ultra-Protestant principle, which dates our Church's interpretation of Scripture from the era of the Reformation, and refers it to the theological opinions of that period, rather than to the teaching of the Primitive Church, as the source from which it is derived. On this principle I shall offer a few remarks hereafter.

Lastly, there is the *Catholic principle*, which, proceeding on the assumption that the Church of England is a sound branch of the Church Universal, prepares us, unless irresistible testimony be produced to the contrary, to declare that no doctrine belongs to the former, which can be proved to be contrary to the teaching of the latter.

It is this last principle which I shall attempt to explain and apply in the following pages ; in which it will be my object, not to lay before my younger brethren all those details of evidence, which may be found in the standard works on the subject, and which could not be comprised within the compass of such a book as this, but to analyze the question in dispute to its elements, and to explain what appears to me to be the nature and the proper order of the argument to be pursued in investigating it.

First, then, the question raised before the Judicial Committee, and, for the legal purposes of their decision, determined by them in the negative, was whether the Church of England *holds* (of course to the exclusion of the contrary proposition) that all infants, baptized according to her due order, do therein and thereby receive remission of sins by spiritual regeneration.¹

¹ Much stress has of late been laid by some on a supposed distinction between the doctrine stated in the Nicene Creed, "I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins," and the doctrine of Baptismal Rege-

The first difficulty, probably, which presents itself to a young divine, in investigating this question, is that which arises from the complex character of the proposition in which the controverted doctrine is stated. It is, in fact, the result of many propositions combined, which must be examined singly, and in their mutual connection, before the whole can be comprehended and received. And this circumstance also gives the first seeming advantage to an opponent of the doctrine. For since the Church cannot of course hold it, unless the Scripture teach it, it is often alleged, as an argument which must overrule all others, that this proposition is nowhere stated in the Bible. To meet this common but very unfair objection, we can only, as Churchmen, have recourse to our Sixth Article, which affirms that not only that which is "*read*" in Holy Scripture, but that which "*may be proved thereby*," may be "required to be believed as an article of faith." Now the statements which are *read in* Holy Scripture are to religious, what axioms are to scientific, truth. Faith receives the one as undoubtingly as Reason does the other. But, when we speak of *proving* a statement *by* Scripture, we necessarily imply some process of human Reason, connecting together, perhaps, many Scriptural statements, and deducing some conclusion from the connection. We imply, also, that none of these statements, unless taken in such connection with the rest, convey the proposition in question; in other words (to

neration: as though it were open to those who admit the former, to deny the latter. It is important therefore to observe, that the Church, in praying that the infant, "coming to God's holy baptism, may receive remission of his sins *by* spiritual regeneration," shows that she does not contemplate remission of sins in Baptism *apart from* spiritual regeneration.

use the very terms of the objection), that the proposition is not to be found stated in Scripture.

But, though this objection be thus overcome, it is still frequently charged upon those who are popularly termed High Churchmen, that, in questions of this sort, they resort ultimately to the teaching of the Church, *instead of* the teaching of the Bible. This great fallacy, out of which so much of the unhappy party-spirit of the present day has grown, has been so often refuted, that I am almost ashamed to advert to it. If all persons were agreed as to what is the teaching of the Bible on the subject, there would of course be no room for discussion at all. But it is notorious, in the present instance, that there are two parties maintaining two opposite conclusions, as “proved by” the same “Holy Scripture.” At this juncture Dissenters, if the controversy touch any of their fundamental tenets, usually separate from each other, and form different sects under different leaders. Churchmen have, in their own Articles of Religion, a principle laid down, which is calculated to prevent this. For this difference of private judgments as to the sense of Scripture becomes at once a “controversy of faith,” in which it is admitted on both sides that “the Church hath authority,”—primarily the Catholic Church, as having God’s promise to preserve it in the truth; and, subordinately, each particular branch of it, on the presumption (and *only* on that presumption) that it is a *true* branch, faithfully representing the mind of the Catholic Church.

If, then, I am asked, why I do not appeal to the Scripture, I can only reply simply that I *have* done so. If I am asked farther, why I am not content with that appeal, I answer that the very fact that others of my

brethren in the Church have formed a contrary judgment, ought to make me distrust my own, until I see it confirmed by the authority of the Church.

It is in this manner, then, that the doctrine of the English Church, as expressed in her Formularies, and, where the meaning of these also is disputed, the doctrine of the Primitive Church, of which they are the recognised exponents, becomes not only a legitimate subject, but the only remaining subject, for inquiry amongst Churchmen.

But, as it must never be forgotten that an appeal made to the authority of the Church by one Churchman against the private opinions of another, always presupposes a previous appeal by both parties to Holy Scripture, and a controversy of faith raised between them by the different conclusions at which they have arrived, the first place in the inquiry must be given to the argument from Scripture.¹

¹ It is, perhaps, scarcely necessary to remark that, in point of fact, this is not the order in which the subject is presented to the mind of any educated Christian. We learn in our childhood to believe implicitly the deductions from Scripture, before we are even *capable* of "searching the Scriptures whether these things are so." Such is the will of God: and it is only one among many evidences that the *principle* of authority and of tradition is an essential part of His plan for instructing mankind in religious truth. Let any one who revolts at the idea of authority, and is scared by the very name of tradition (because of the unhappy perversion of the term by the Romanist), and declares that he relies only on the pure Word of God, take an English Bible into his hands, and ask himself on what ground he calls it the pure Word of God; that is, believes it to be the whole revelation, and nothing but the revelation, made to inspired men, and recorded by them in writings, of which the earliest existing copies are more than 300 years later than the Apostolic Age. While the testimony of ecclesiastical historians, of much remoter date than these ancient manuscripts, informs us of the flagrant corruptions of the text of Scripture, and of the intrusion of spurious books by the

And this, as I have said, cannot be shown, until the proposition to be proved by Scripture has been resolved into its Scriptural elements. These may, I think, be thus briefly stated :—

1. It is “read in Scripture” that our Lord and His Apostles spoke of a connection between Baptism and the gifts of remission of sins and spiritual regeneration, in such terms as to render the conclusion probable that a conveyance of these gifts was constituted by Christ Himself an essential property of that His Holy Ordinance.

2. It is *not* “read in Scripture” that, when our Lord gave His command to baptize all nations, or at any other time, He intimated that infants should be excluded from this ordinance by reason of their tender age ; but, on the contrary, Scripture furnishes probable reasons for an opposite conclusion.

3. It is “read in Scripture” that faith and repentance were required of adult persons before they were admitted to Baptism ; and it is read in such terms as to render the conclusion probable that God will withhold the grace of Baptism from all those who come to receive the rite in unbelief and impenitence.

4. It is *not* “read in Scripture” that God will withhold that grace in any *other* cases but those of unbelief and impenitence.

heretics of their own day, how does he know that none of these adulterations have found their way into the Bible of his own Church ? How does he know that its text is genuine ? and that the true sense of the Sacred Writings is faithfully represented in the English translation ? In almost every case the answer will be, that all this has been taken entirely for granted. And when he asks himself *why* he has done so, he will see to what extent he has been all his life relying implicitly on Church authority and Church tradition.

If these several propositions and conclusions be true, what is their combined result ?

1. That, since it is our Lord's will that infants, *as a class*, be admitted to His Ordinance of Baptism, it is His will that, as a class, they be admitted to the spiritual grace, which He has made an essential part of Baptism, and without which Baptism would not be *His Ordinance*, but a mere outward form and ceremony.

2. That, since the grace of Baptism is not withheld from any *individual* duly baptized, except in the case of unbelief and impenitence, and since no infants are capable of either, the grace of Baptism is not withheld from any individual infant duly baptized.

When the argument has been thus resolved into its component parts, then, and not till then, are we in a condition to bring them severally to the test of Scripture. The resulting conclusions must be tested by the authoritative declarations of the Church.

And, first, as regards the essential connection of spiritual regeneration and the remission of sin with the rite of Baptism.

When I read in Holy Scripture of the distinction between the baptism of John and that of Jesus Christ, "He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost,"¹ I infer from this that Christian Baptism differs from a mere ceremonial act of purifying by water, in that it confers a gift of the Holy Ghost; and in the descent of the Holy Ghost on our Lord at His own baptism, I recognise a solemn visible

¹ John, i. 33.

manifestation of this truth.¹ When I find the Saviour speaking of being “born of water and of the Spirit,”² and His apostles of “the washing of regeneration, and “renewing of the Holy Ghost;”³ of being “buried with “him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him; “through the faith of the operation of God, who hath “raised him from the dead;”⁴ of Christian converts being “all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus,” *because* “as many of them as have been baptized into “Christ have put on Christ,”⁵ I infer that the special gift of the Holy Ghost, conferred through the washing of water, is a regeneration or new birth, a spiritual resurrection, renewing the inward man, making him a child of God, through putting on Christ the Only-begotten. When I read that “he that believeth and is baptized “shall be saved;”⁶ that “except a man be born of water “and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of “God;”⁷ that “baptism doth also now save us, (not the

¹ “But if baptism is not accompanied with such an effusion of the Holy Spirit towards the inward renewing of the heart, that the person baptized, who of himself and of his own nature could ‘do no good thing,’ by this amendment or regeneration of his nature is enabled to bring forth fruit, ‘thirty, or sixty, or an hundred fold,’ and ‘giving all diligence to make his calling and election sure,’—if the effect, I say, of baptism is less than this, what becomes of the distinction made by the Baptist, ‘I indeed baptize with water, but he who comes after me, shall baptize with the Holy Ghost?’ What becomes of the example of Christ Himself? After His baptism, the descent of the Holy Spirit, in a visible form, was surely intended to confirm his followers in a belief that their baptism would confer upon them a similar gift; and, besides the washing away of their sins, and remission of the penalty entailed upon the posterity of Adam, would bestow upon them a power enabling them to fulfil the covenant laws of their religion.” — *ABP. OF CANTERBURY’S Apostolical Preaching*, p. 176., 9th edition.

² John, iii. 5.³ Tit. iii. 5.⁴ Col. ii. 12.⁵ Gal. iii. 26.⁶ Mark, xvi. 16.⁷ John, iii. 5.

“ putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer
 “ of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrec-
 “ tion of Jesus Christ ;”¹ that God, “ according to his
 “ mercy,”² saved the Christian converts in St. Paul’s
 “ days by the washing of regeneration and renewing of
 “ the Holy Ghost,” I infer, not only that Baptism (thus
 consisting of an outward sign and an inward grace) is
 generally necessary to salvation, but that it brings men
 into a state of salvation, and gives them an entrance, in
 this world, into the kingdom of God.

When I read of St. Peter bidding his hearers at
 Jerusalem “ be baptized for the remission of sins ;”³ of
 St. Paul receiving a command to “ be baptized and
 “ wash away his sins,”⁴ I infer that sins are remitted
 and washed away in Baptism, and not until Baptism⁵,
 even in those who, like St. Paul, are special objects
 of divine mercy and favour.

Next, with respect to the admissibility of infants to
 the rite of Baptism.

I read that the command of our Lord to baptize was
 made in unlimited terms ; and I find nowhere in Scrip-
 ture that He prohibited infants, on account of their age,
 from partaking in the rite. On the other hand, there
 is everything to lead me to believe that no such prohi-
 bition, but the contrary, was intended. For I read, not
 only that, under the typical dispensation of the Law,
 children were, by God’s command, admitted into cove-
 nant with Him when eight days old, and were solemnly
 presented to Him in the temple in their earliest infancy,

¹ 1 Pet. iii. 21.

² Tit. iii. 5.

³ Acts, ii. 38.

⁴ Acts, xxii. 16.

⁵ I here only speak of the general law of God’s dispensations, without
 intending any conclusion as to the case of those who die unbaptized.

but that Christ himself commanded them to be brought to Him that He might bless them, and was much displeased with those who would have kept them from Him, saying, “Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God.”¹

Again, when I read in Holy Scripture of our Saviour joining belief with Baptism, and adding that “he that believeth not shall be damned;”² of Philip saying to the Ethiopian, “If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest” [be baptized];³ of St. Peter urging his hearers to “repent, and be baptized every one,”⁴ I infer that, in persons capable of faith and repentance, these are necessary pre-requisites for Baptism, and that, without them, Baptism would be ineffectual.

But, lastly, when I remember that infants cannot believe or repent, and that our Lord nevertheless said that “of *such* is the kingdom of God,” I infer that He did not consider the absence of those qualifications, of which their nature is incapable, a ground for excluding them from that birth of water and of the Spirit, without which He had himself declared that none could “enter into the kingdom of God.”

Putting, then, these conclusions together, I infer from Holy Scripture that Christian Baptism is an outward washing with water, accompanied by an inward gift of the Holy Ghost; that this gift is called regeneration, or new birth; that it implies remission of sin, renewing by the Holy Ghost, a putting on of Christ, adoption to be children of God, a present entrance into the kingdom of God, and a promise—of course a *conditional* promise—of salvation hereafter. I infer,

¹ Mark, x. 14.

² Mark, xvi. 16.

³ Acts, viii. 37.

⁴ Acts, ii. 38.

also, that infants are not to be excluded from Baptism on account of their tender years; and that, as they have no unbelief nor unrepented sin to place a bar to the reception of these blessings, and as Scripture speaks of no other bar to it, the inward grace of Baptism does in their case invariably accompany the outward sign.

Such, then, is the doctrine which, according to the deliberate conviction of my own mind, I hold "may be proved by Holy Scripture." But here I find that others, in the like exercise of their judgment, have inferred, not only that this doctrine is not to be proved, but that its contrary is to be proved, by Scripture; denying the validity of the interpretations, which I have put upon the various passages of Scripture cited by me; and therefore denying the conclusions which I have deduced from them. I dispute not their right to form this opinion. It is exactly equal to my own to form the contrary one. I merely claim of them, as Churchmen, to carry with me this difference of judgment to the arbitration of the common "authority," which we both profess to acknowledge—the authority of the Church: to appeal to her doctrinal formularies—her Catechism, her Articles, her Liturgies. For these are all alike doctrinal authorities on this question: the Catechism, as "an instruction to be learned of every person;" the Articles, as having been "agreed upon for avoiding of diversities of opinions, and for the establishing of consent touching true religion;" and the Baptismal Services, as having in them "the doctrine of baptism so sufficiently set down, as nothing can be added unto it that is material or necessary."¹ Do, then, these documents sanction the interpretations of Scripture, which

¹ Canon 57.

* *When 2 parties differ, the only way is to leave it to* ^{c 2}

I have proposed? Do they affirm the conclusions which I have drawn from them? This opens to us a new and distinct field of inquiry. In entering upon it, however, I shall reverse the order previously observed, and look first to the *final conclusion* which I have drawn. If this be clearly *denied* by the Church, it matters little, for the argument, whether the premises on which it is founded be true or false. If it seem even in one place to be clearly *affirmed*, and in none denied, I have a right to throw the onus of disproving it on those who deny it; and then the consideration of the premises will fitly come in during the discussion of their objections.

We have, then, the incontrovertible fact, that our Church—in that Service for the administration of Baptism, in which her 57th Canon declares that the doctrine of Baptism is so sufficiently set down as nothing can be added unto it which is material or necessary—after having, immediately before the baptism of an infant, put up the prayer to God, “Give thy Holy Spirit to this infant, that he *may be* born again,” dogmatically declares, immediately after the baptism, “this child *is* regenerate.” And, in the case of Private Baptism, in which the administration of the Sacrament is disjoined, in point of time, from this declaration, the expression is carefully enlarged, so as to connect the regeneration with the sacrament; and the Minister is instructed to pronounce that “this child is *by baptism* regenerate.” On this declared fact are avowedly built the thanksgiving and prayer which immediately follow: “*Seeing now*, dearly beloved brethren, that this child is “by baptism regenerate, and grafted into the body of “Christ’s Church, let us give thanks unto Almighty God “for these benefits, and with one accord make our prayers

“ unto him, that he may lead the rest of his life *according to this beginning.*”

I shall return presently to a more minute examination of these expressions, when I come to consider the objections made to the literal and absolute interpretation of them. I adduce them now simply to show the naked fact, that our Church declares of *every* infant, baptized according to her order, that he is regenerated *at the time* of his baptism, and *through its instrumentality* : at the time, as is clear from a comparison of the prayer *before* his baptism, “ that he *may be* born again,” with the declaration *after* it, that he “ *is* regenerate ;” and through its instrumentality, as her own words “ by baptism” prove, specially introduced, as we have seen, for the express purpose of guarding against any possible doubt as to her meaning.

I have now, then, a decided advantage to commence with, and have a right to take my stand upon the words, used in the case of infants without qualification or exception, “ this child is by baptism regenerate ;” and to call upon the other side to declare and to *prove* what these words mean, if they do not mean that which they actually say ; and, if there be a qualification or exception implied, to state wherein it consists, and where it is declared. The answer usually given to this, namely, that the same words are used in the Service for Adult Baptism, in which we all allow that they cannot be of universal application, is not admissible ; because, in that Service, the words “ truly repenting and coming “ unto Him by faith” are expressly introduced, as declaring the condition, on which we are called upon to believe that God will grant to the person to be baptized the spiritual benefits of the Sacrament ; and these,

therefore, furnish a precise and intelligible limitation to the words in question. There is no doubt, then, in the case of adults. But what mean the words in the case of infants?

It is notorious that those who deny the unconditional sense, which they seem to bear, have, by a process of reasoning which is satisfactory, it may be presumed, to their own minds, and which I shall examine presently, determined that the words, "this child is by baptism *regenerate*," were deliberately used with the intent of embracing the following range of possibilities:— that this child *may have been* regenerated, by an act of grace prevenient to Baptism; or *may be about to be* regenerated, by some act subsequent to it; or may have been (possibly) regenerated at the time of Baptism; or *may never have been, and never be about to be*, regenerated at all. I do not stop to ask of those who so understand these words, what language more precise and definite the Church could possibly have used, supposing her to have *intended* to declare that the regeneration of baptized infants was universal. It is sufficient for my present purpose that they do not accept these words as determining the controversy. Still the debate is not at an end. A third field of inquiry remains untouched. It still remains to be asked, what interpretation of the expression under consideration harmonises with the voice of the Primitive Catholic Church, of which the Church of England is to us the accredited exponent.

It would be foreign to the character of so brief a work as this to show, by an induction of particular instances, the unanimity of ancient and cotemporaneous testimony to the doctrine of the Primitive Church on this subject. Even had I the time and all the materials

Every member of the Primitive Catholic Church

necessary for the task at hand, it has been already laboriously and ably executed by others far more competent to it than I can pretend to be. I would refer my readers especially to Bingham's *Christian Antiquities*, to Wall on *Infant Baptism*, to the learned treatises of Bishop Kaye, on three of the earliest Fathers—Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian; and to the invaluable work of Bishop Bethell on *Regeneration*: a work, indeed, which has left scarcely anything to be written on any part of the subject. The latter living writer has placed on record the following result of his investigations:—

“The doctrine of Regeneration in and through Baptism, as a necessary article of Christian Faith, grounded on our Saviour's express declaration, may be traced backward, without interruption, from the time of the Reformation to the days of the Apostles.”¹

“The Regeneration of all baptized infants, without exception, is a doctrine likewise everywhere avowed by the Fathers, and established by the Canons and discipline of the Church.”²

“We have seen, likewise, that the doctrine which our Services contain, according to the most obvious and accustomed principles of interpretation, is precisely what we might have expected from the views and professions of their compilers; for it is in complete accordance with the opinions of Catholic Christianity, from the days of the Apostles to the time of the Reformation. It came before them, not as a doubtful and disputed point, but as a fundamental and established

¹ Bethell on *Baptismal Regeneration*, p. 89. 2d edition.

² *Ibid.* p. 18.

“ truth ; not asserted and defended by a few doctors
 “ and apologists as their own private opinion, but re-
 “ corded or alluded to, as a doctrine received without con-
 “ tradiction in the Church of Christ, by the whole body
 “ of Fathers, Councils, and Ecclesiastical Historians.”¹

These strong and unqualified statements, open, if false, to easy and immediate refutation, are such as a controversial writer would scarcely have ventured upon, had he not well assured himself of their truth. The only way, in which we can account for the indifference with which the fact thus stated appears to have been received by those who have been termed Ultra-Protestants, is that they professedly exclude all reference to Catholic Teaching, as a key to the interpretation of the Formularies of the Church of England.

For those, then, who are disposed to rely contentedly on a simple declaration of the Church—believing neither more nor less than what the very words of that declaration, in their most natural sense, convey—the dogmatic statements, to which I have referred, harmonising, as they are found to do, with all that we can gather of the doctrine of the Primitive Church, close the question, and determine the controversy of Faith. And the young theological student, who has thoroughly digested this view in his mind, and has adopted it as his own, will at least have the comfort of knowing that he has proceeded on safe and legitimate principles ; and that he is “ ready always,” which many are not, “ to give an
 “ answer to every man, that asketh him a reason” of the belief that is in him on this important subject.

It is not enough, however, for such a one to satisfy

¹ Bethell on Baptismal Regeneration, p. 111. 2d edition.

himself, and to be able to expound and vindicate his own view. He must acquaint himself also with the objections, with which it will be met by others, and must prepare himself to answer them. He must examine the theories, which they have proposed for the purpose of explaining away the force of that plain language of the Church, received by him as the authoritative exposition of the doctrine which "may be proved "by Holy Scripture." He must try the validity of their principles, measure the depth and weight of their arguments, and determine on which side the preponderance of probability lies. For questions of Faith are of too serious importance to be left in abeyance, as some would seem disposed to leave them, merely on the ground that pious and learned men have been found to differ respecting them.

I must here repeat, because it is a point of great importance, though frequently overlooked in the controversy, that he who takes the view which has been already laid down, has a *primâ facie* case in his favour; and, before examining any other interpretations of the language of the Baptismal Service, has a right to ask for the objections, which can be raised against the literal one, which propounds his own view. Two of these may be easily disposed of, as springing out of a mere misconception of the sentiments of those, who teach the essential connection of Spiritual Regeneration with Baptism.

The first objection is, that this doctrine involves a reliance on a work of man, an *opus operatum*, instead of a simple faith in Christ. Now it is certainly strange that the objector should not at once perceive that, if men believe that Christ himself has ordained an out-

ward act, as a means whereby an inward grace shall be received, (and they who believe in the doctrines of our Church Catechism can believe no less), then, in precisely the same degree in which they have a simple faith in Christ, must they have a simple reliance on the efficacy of this act. The one belief is the measure and exponent of the other. If the cripple in the synagogue, who stretched forth his withered hand; the blind man, who washed in the pool of Siloam; the woman, who touched the Saviour's clothing, saying within herself "if I may but touch his garment I shall be whole"—if they who did these things, *and were rewarded for their faith in so doing*, relied upon an *opus operatum*, then, in precisely the same and in no other way, do those also who trust implicitly in the regenerating power of Baptism.

The second objection, to which I referred, is, that this doctrine tends to diminish the sense of moral responsibility, and to lull men into a state of indolent security, instead of inculcating the necessity of watchfulness, of prayer, and of striving after a growth in grace, and a continual advance in practical holiness. Now this objection may be very reasonably urged against what is called the doctrine of Assurance, which permits men, on the evidence of an internal conviction, to regard their own final salvation as certain; a doctrine which is very commonly maintained by those, who repudiate that of Baptismal Regeneration. For whatever may be said of the effect of such an assurance in convincing men of the *hatefulness* of sin, it unquestionably wants one important ingredient of practical teaching, a warning *in their own case* against its *danger*.¹

¹ The dangers arising from the doctrine of Predestination, under any of its modifications, are so practical, so plain, and so favoured by the

But the objection, when urged against the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration, always presumes the *abuse* of the doctrine, and betrays an ignorance of its right use and application. In truth, the great value of this doctrine lies in its practical application; in the powerful topics, which it furnishes, of exhortation, of encouragement, and of warning; in the extent to which it enhances the obligation to holiness, and aggravates the guilt and peril of sin. What can encourage a man to seek continually a *growth* in grace more powerfully than the assurance that his *birth* in grace has, through the love and power of God, been already accomplished? What can so promote his love of holiness, as the belief in his own personal union and incorporation with Him who is the very fount of holiness, yea, who is Holiness itself? And, on the other hand, what is more calculated to induce an hatred and fear of sin, than the knowledge that it is a revival of the condemnation which God has remitted: the pollution of a soul, which God once cleansed, and sanctified, and condescended to dwell in? So taught the Apostle Paul. If he desires to guard Christian men against the sins of the body, he reminds them that their “bodies are the members of

slothful and self-excusing principles of human nature, that it ought to be read in St. Paul with the plainness of the command to believe in Christ, or to love our neighbour, before it is inculcated to a congregation. It matters not that a pious Calvinist disclaims the natural results, or an acute disputant can explain them away; it is notorious that the illiterate enthusiast believes, and the sinner flatters himself with expecting, that if he is one of the elect, he shall somehow or other be finally snatched out of the fire; and if he is not, that no exertions of his own can ever avail. Thus the real conclusion and the practical evil of the doctrine of election meet together.” — ABR. OF CANTERBURY'S *Apostolical Preaching*, p. 101. 9th edition (1850).

“ Christ.” ¹ If he would teach them how to measure the guilt of such sins in themselves, in comparison with the guilt of others placed in a less privileged condition, he tells them first of those who “ despised Moses’ law,” ² and “ died without mercy under two or three witnesses;” and then asks them, “ of how much sorer punishment, “ suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath “ trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted “ the blood of the covenant, *wherewith he was sanctified*, “ an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit “ of grace ?” And, not to multiply examples, see how in the same Epistle, and when addressing the same persons, he uses their belief in the very doctrine which we are now considering, the indwelling of the Spirit in the baptized Christian, both as the strongest motive to holiness, and as the strongest proof of the exceeding sinfulness and danger of sin. “ Know ye not that “ your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is in* “ *you*, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own ? “ For ye are bought with a price : *therefore* glorify God “ in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” ³ “ Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and “ that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you ? If any man “ *defile* the temple of God, him shall God destroy ⁴; for “ the temple of God is *holy*, which temple *ye are*.” ⁵

¹ 1 Cor. vi. 15.

² Heb. x. 28.

³ 1 Cor. vi. 19.

⁴ As I do not wish to carry the interpretation of any text beyond what the words will fairly bear, I would observe that the context of this passage seems to point to a very different class of sins from those referred to in 1 Cor. vi. 15—19. Whitby, however, thinks that the use of the same words in the latter passage “ more naturally incline us to refer these verses to the corrupting of the temple of God by filthiness of the flesh.” (See the whole of his note on the place.) The passage, however, in *any* case, serves the purpose for which I cite it ; namely, to show that the guilt of

And so, too, the Church of England has ever taught ; making, as has been truly said, the doctrine of Regeneration in Baptism the very foundation-stone of her whole system of Christian education : taking as the first fact, which she desires to impress upon the minds of her children, that each of them was “ in his baptism “ made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an “ inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven : ” and building upon this fact his duty “ to believe and to do all “ that was then promised for him ; to thank heartily “ his Heavenly Father that He hath called him to “ that state of salvation ; and to pray unto God to “ give him His grace, that he may continue in the “ same unto his life’s end.” And, as respects the tendency of the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration to produce a lively fear of sin, can we forget that so deep was the feeling sometimes produced, by that doctrine, on the subject of post-baptismal sin, that our Church found it necessary, in an Article specially drawn up on the subject of “ Sin after Baptism,” to declare that “ Not every deadly sin willingly committed *after baptism* is sin against the Holy Ghost, *and unpardonable*. “ Wherefore the grant of repentance is not to be “ denied to such as fall into sin after baptism. *After “ we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart “ from grace given, and fall into sin ; and by the “ grace of God we may arise again, and amend our “ lives.”*⁶ In this Article the following important doc-

sin in baptized Christians (of whatever kind St. Paul is speaking) was declared by him to be aggravated by the fact, that they were “ the temple of God,” and “ that the Spirit of God was dwelling in them ; ” and that he made *their belief* in this fact the *ground* of his practical exhortation, “ *Know ye not,*” &c.

⁵ 1 Cor. vi. 16.

⁶ Art. 16.

trines are to be noticed :— That sin after Baptism is identical with “departing from grace given after we “have received the Holy Ghost ;” that such sin may be willingly committed, and may be “deadly,” though not *such* a “sin against the Holy Ghost” as to be “un-“pardonable,” because, “by the grace of God, we may “arise again and amend our lives.” The whole doctrine has been well summed up by the present Archbishop of Canterbury. After speaking of the regeneration of “those who are devoted to Christ as infants by baptism,”¹ he says, “we hold that those who grow up “may or may not fall from this state of grace ; and that “those who have fallen may or may not recover and “be finally saved ; and therefore that all are to be exhorted ‘to examine themselves whether they be in “the faith ;’ to repent and to turn to their Saviour if “they are not ; to labour, if they are, still more after “the ‘inward renewing of their souls day by day.’”¹

Now let this system of teaching be compared with that which lays down as its basis, that the commencement of the work of grace in each individual ensures its final and glorious consummation, excluding all possibility of failure from his own indolence and neglect ; which leaves the period of that commencement to be determined by his own internal consciousness, and its reality by the judgment which he himself may form of the spiritual character of his own feelings, principles, and actions. When the comparison is fairly made, it may safely be left, I think, to the unprejudiced inquirer to determine which of the two systems affords the strongest motive to “him that thinketh he standeth”

¹ Apostolical Preaching, p. 168. ed. 1850.

to “take heed lest he fall;” to “give diligence to “make his calling and election sure;” to “work out his “own salvation with fear and trembling;” to “beware “lest, being led away with the error of the wicked, he “fall from his own steadfastness;” in a word, which of the two is calculated to awaken and to cherish the most anxious and lively sense of his own moral responsibility.

A third objection often made to the full literal interpretation of the words of the Baptismal Service is, that it ascribes to Baptism what Scripture ascribes to other causes, without reference to Baptism; to the will of God, to the blood of Christ, to the Word of God, to the faith of the Christian. Now, if these expressions do not interfere with, and contradict *each other*, why should they be inconsistent with the ascription of the same blessings to a special ordinance of God—Baptism? When, for instance, the Scripture says in one place, “ye are clean through *the word*;” in another, “ye “are washed . . . *by the Spirit* of our God;” in a third, “*the blood of Jesus Christ* his Son cleanseth us from “all sin;” we receive these expressions in their simplest sense, and do not consider any one of them repugnant to any other. Why, then, should we hesitate to add, in its simplest sense also, the text, “be *baptized* and wash “away thy sins?” Let us suppose a case of bodily blessings. A sick man is advised to consult a physician; he does so, uses the prescribed remedy, and recovers. May not his recovery, according to the ordinary and legitimate use of language, be ascribed to the counsel of his friends? to his own adoption of it? to the skill of the physician? to the properties of the medicine? to his own act in taking it? And yet, after all, is it not to be *exclusively* ascribed to the mercy of God? So,

in the present case, certain blessings are revealed in Scripture as flowing to us from the love and mercy of God. The will of God determines them; the blood of Christ purchases them; the Word leads men to seek them; Faith embraces them; and Baptism conveys them. Why should we suppose that the free gifts of God, which His will and mercy have provided, and the blood of His Son has purchased, may not be conveyed by Baptism, to those whom He admits to Baptism, at an age when the Word cannot be received, and Faith cannot be exercised?

Another unfair objection to the doctrine which we are considering is, that it obliges us to call even profligate and openly irreligious men "regenerate." This is usually employed as a sort of triumphant taunt, as though such an application of the term "regenerate" involved a palpable contradiction and absurdity. I call the objection unfair, because its entire force depends upon the truth of an assumption which it is known *cannot be admitted* by the other side; namely, that the term "Regeneration" implies a grace which *must necessarily* manifest itself by the abiding fruits of holiness. Now, if the Church of England holds this definition of the term, she *cannot possibly* teach that *all* infants are "by baptism regenerate;" and if she does not hold it, then there is no sort of contradiction or absurdity in her applying the term to those who grow up in ungodliness. To assume, then, a definition of the controverted term, which *necessarily* carries with it the determination of the controversy, is so palpable a begging of the question, that it is only wonderful how so many persons can be found to be satisfied with it. Before such an objection can be fairly used at all, it should be

proved that the Church intends such a meaning of the word "regenerate" as is here assumed. Now the truth is, that the meaning attached by the Church to this theological term is the very question to which the whole controversy may be analyzed, and on which it mainly turns. The point is of so much importance, as to deserve a very close and minute consideration. To this I now proceed.

Confusion of ideas, and errors consequent upon them, frequently arise from the various uses of the same words, which the idioms of language sanction. The past participles of verbs are employed to denote sometimes an act done or suffered at some point of past time, sometimes the present continuance of its effects. When such effects do continue, it may not be either easy or necessary to determine which of the two ideas was uppermost in the mind when the word was used. When, for instance, we think or speak of a church as "a consecrated building," our mind is probably more directed to its present holy uses, than to the act of consecration, which, long ago perhaps, dedicated it to such uses. At all events, the two ideas are so entirely blended together in our thoughts, as, for the purpose for which we employ the term, to form but one. And yet we know them to be entirely separable. The building may have been long since perverted to secular or profane purposes; nay, it may never have been used as a church at all; and yet might still truly be called "consecrated" in respect of that original act of consecration, which was once performed and can never be undone.

The same remarks may be made on the language applied by the Apostles to the members of those Churches, to which their Epistles are addressed. Such

expressions as "born of God,"¹ "begotten to an inheritance incorruptible,"² "called to be saints,"³ "sanctified in Christ Jesus,"⁴ "accepted in the Beloved,"⁵ necessarily, from the nature of the case, imply the double idea of a specific act on the part of God, and of the continuing manifestation of its effects in man. I say from the nature of the case, not only because it is *probable* that those who had been recently converted to Christianity, in days when its profession was so opposed to their worldly interests, would be sincere, zealous, and active Christians, and not abusers of God's grace, but because the Apostles themselves expressly declare that they *were* so; for they address them as men, who were then causing to themselves joy, and comfort, and thankfulness; whose "faith is spoken of throughout the whole world;"⁶ who "come behind in no gift;"⁷ in whom "the Gospel bringeth forth fruit since the day they heard of it;" who are "ensamples to all that believe;"⁸ whose "faith groweth exceedingly," and whose "charity aboundeth," and in whom "the anointing which they have received of God abideth."⁹ Thus when St. Paul, speaking of Heathen sinners to his Corinthian brethren, adds, "and such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified,"¹⁰ his words doubtless imply that they were at that time living in a condition of spiritual cleanness, holiness, and freedom from condemnation. Yet, in their more accurate construction, these words refer to past *acts of God*, which would have made them

¹ 1 John, v. 1.² 1 Pet. i. 4.³ Rom. i. 7.⁴ 1 Cor. i. 2.⁵ Eph. i. 6.⁶ Rom. i. 8.⁷ 1 Cor. i. 7.⁸ 1 Thess. i. 7.⁹ 1 John, ii. 27.¹⁰ 1 Cor. vi. 11.

strictly true and applicable in cases where these effects had *not* continued. And that Scripture contemplates the possibility of such cases may be easily shown. I have already cited passages, in which St. Paul speaks of "defiling the temple of God," of abusing to wicked purposes those "bodies," which are "the members of Christ;" of "counting the blood of the covenant, wherewith a man was sanctified, an unholy thing, and doing despite to the Spirit of grace." I will add the following examples:—"If, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning."¹ "Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity. . . . He that *lacketh* these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten *that he was purged from his old sins.*"²

From such considerations as these we may learn first, that the use of words in Scripture, to express spiritual gifts accompanied by their proper fruits, does not authorize us to believe that such fruits in *all* cases accompany the gifts; and, as a consequence of this, that we must expect to find in Scripture many statements respecting those who are *rightly using* God's gifts, which are not necessarily applicable to *all* those who have *received* such gifts. Thus, when St. John writes that, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin,"³ and that "he cannot sin," we can readily understand his

¹ 2 Pet. ii. 20.² 2 Pet. i. 5.³ 1 John, iii. 9.

words, when we remember that he is addressing those, whose lives were actually exhibiting the contrast of which he is speaking, between the "children of God" and the "children of the devil" in the heathen world around them. They show that regeneration is the only source of holiness, and that holiness is the proper fruit of regeneration; but, as we may not "so expound one "place of Scripture that it be repugnant to another,"¹ we may not, in the face of those places of Scripture which I have just previously cited, expound these words of St. John to mean that no one, on whom God's act of regeneration has been performed, can possibly sin: and we must remember that St. John himself, in this very Epistle, contemplates the possibility of a "brother" sinning even "a sin unto death," as well as one "which "is not unto death."²

Holy Scripture, then, teaches us nothing which *prevents* our believing that God has regenerated those infants in Baptism, who do not afterwards go on to that conversion and renovation of the soul, of which regeneration is the first germ and the disposing cause³; nothing, therefore, which prevents our understanding the words, "this child is by baptism regenerate," in their simplest sense, as retrospective of the initial communication, not as anticipating or dependent on the future process, of the new and spiritual life.

¹ Art. ix.

² 1 John, v. 16.

³ "Baptism is a sacrament which God hath instituted in his church, to the end that they which receive the same might thereby be incorporated into Christ, and so, through his most precious merit, obtain, as well that saving grace of imputation which taketh away all former guiltiness, as also that infused divine virtue of the Holy Ghost which giveth to the powers of the soul their first disposition towards future newness of life."
— HOOKER'S *Eccl. Polity*, b. v. c. 60. s. 2.

Is there then, let us next ask, anything in the language of the Church of England to prevent our thus believing? Does *she* confine the term "regenerate" to those, who "walk religiously in good works, and at length, by God's mercy, attain to everlasting felicity?"¹ On this point we may, I think, easily confute the objector out of his own mouth. It is the argument constantly advanced by those who maintain this view, that though all her baptized children are not *really* regenerate, all are *presumed* to be so; and that all our Services, being intended for general use, are necessarily drawn up on the charitable hypothesis that they *are* so. If, then, those alone are regenerate, who "walk religiously in good works," and "at length attain to everlasting felicity," the former 'charitable hypothesis' must include this consequence also; and we should expect to find our Services drawn up on the supposition of the *holiness*, as well as of the *regeneration*, of her members. But is this so? To pass over the strong language of penitential confession, which pervades generally all these Services, and which is calculated to include any amount of sin, however grievous, let us take one or two particular instances, in which the possibility at least of those, who are either believed or "charitably presumed" to have been regenerated, falling into the worst sins, and being finally lost, is unquestionably contemplated. In the Collect for Christmas Day we pray, "Grant that we, *being regenerate*², and made thy children by adop-

¹ Art. 17.

² I have heard it sometimes asserted that these words in the Collect imply a prayer for future regeneration, not a recognition of a blessing already received. The only argument, by which this notion is supported, is that the idiom of language *allows* of such a sense; which cannot be

"tion and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit." This language is universal, and entirely agrees with the theory of the Services being drawn up on the hypothesis of universal regeneration. But let us now turn to the Communion Service, in which we may suppose the very same congregation to be joining who had joined in this Collect. There we find the following exhortations:—"Let us, while we have the light, believe in the light, and walk as children of the light, *that we be not cast into utter darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth.* Let us not abuse the goodness of God, who calleth us mercifully to amendment, and of his endless pity promiseth us forgiveness of that which is past, *if* with a perfect and true heart *we return* unto him. Turn ye (saith the Lord) from all your wickedness, and your sin shall not

denied. This interpretation, however, may be easily shown to be an *impossible* one, by a simple reference to the Baptismal Services, which furnish rather a remarkable testimony on the point. In the Service for the Public Baptism of Infants, there is a prayer preceding the administration of the Sacrament, "Give thy Holy Spirit to this infant, that he *may be* born again." In the Service for receiving into the congregation infants privately baptized, the same prayer is introduced. But here, Baptism having before taken place, the expression is changed to "Give thy Holy Spirit to this infant, that he *being* born again . . . may *continue* thy servant." In the Service for adults the same form of words, commencing with "We give thee humble thanks that thou hast vouchsafed to call us to the knowledge of thy grace," &c., is introduced *twice*; once before, and once after the Baptism. In the former place the words are "Give thy Holy Spirit to these persons, that they *may be* born again;" in the latter, "Give thy Holy Spirit to these persons, that, *being now born* again . . . they may *continue* thy servants." I suppose that no one will deny that, in these Services at least, the word "*being*" is retrospective. How then can it be prospective in the Collect for Christmas Day? How would the Church be consistent with herself in using the same expression to imply, in one place, at least the *hypothesis* that *all* are regenerate, and, in another, the hypothesis that *all* are *unregenerate*?

"be your destruction: cast away from you all your un-
 "godliness that ye have done: make you new hearts,
 "and a new spirit: *wherefore will ye die, O ye house*
 "of Israel? seeing that I have no pleasure in the death
 "of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: *turn ye then,*
 "*and ye shall live.*" Look, again, to the exhortation to
 the receiving of the Holy Communion. "If any of you be
 "a blasphemer of God, an hinderer or slanderer of his
 "word, an adulterer, or be in malice or envy, or in any
 "other grievous crime, repent you of your sins; or else
 "come not to that holy table, lest, after the taking of that
 "holy Sacrament, *the devil enter into you, as he entered*
 "*into Judas, and fill you full of all iniquities, and bring*
 "*you to destruction both of body and soul.*" I repeat,
 "that all this language is addressed *generally* to those
 who are also included in the *general* expression, "we
 "being regenerate and made Thy children by adoption
 "and grace;" and I confess myself unable to perceive
 how those who maintain that all our Services are drawn
 up in consistency with the primary hypothesis, that all
 infants are regenerated in Baptism, can also maintain
 that regeneration *necessarily* leads to the abiding fruits
 of holiness, and to final salvation. But even if this
 argument were insufficient, there is the fact, to which I
 have before adverted, that our Church, in her Article on
 "Sin after Baptism," distinctly contemplates the case
 of men "departing from grace given, and falling into
 "sin, *after they have received the Holy Ghost,*" and of
 that sin being not only "willingly committed," but
 "deadly."

These considerations respecting the definition of Re-
 generation may be further strengthened, when we reflect
 upon the strict etymological meaning of the word. We

must remember that its equivalent, "born again," is a metaphorical term, selected by our Lord himself, who, in condescension to the imperfection of our understanding, has taught us all spiritual mysteries through the medium of objects familiar to our senses. It is unwise, indeed, and often leads to much error, to pursue our reasonings too far upon the figurative language thus employed. But still it must have been intended that some light, at least, should be thrown on the truth revealed, through the analogies suggested by the primary meaning of the metaphorical term. For instance, the work of grace in man is described in Scripture under other figures besides that immediately under our consideration; as the growth of a plant from a seed, and the leavening of a mass of meal. In these cases, the metaphor employed not only suggests a gradual and progressive character belonging to the work, but also a specific initiatory act confined to a precise point of time, constituting the first step in the work, and at the same time giving a disposition and capacity for its fulfilment. The growth of the plant is referred to the act of a man "casting seed into his field;" the leavening of the meal, to that of a woman "taking" the leaven, and "hiding" it in the meal. It is clear too, in each case, that the performance of the first step in no way *necessarily* infers the further progress, still less the final accomplishment, of the work. The leaven may be introduced, yet, from want of care to place it in a proper temperature, the meal may continue unleavened. The seed may be sown, yet a thousand causes may contribute to prevent the plant from springing, or even to destroy its vitality before it begins to be developed. And yet the natural properties both of the leaven and of the

seed, conferred upon them by the Creator, were in them at the first. The initiatory act was done; the farther progress was stopped by causes subsequent to and independent of it. And so with the particular metaphor before us. Birth is but the initial step of life; but it does not necessarily infer the *continuance* of life, or of any of those properties with which the body was born. A child, before it has reasoned, or spoken, or walked, may receive some injury, possibly from the carelessness or ill-treatment of those about it, which may cause it to grow up idiotic, or crippled, or dumb. Yet this affects not the fact that it was *born* a rational creature, and with its limbs and organs of speech perfectly formed by the Creator for their various purposes. It may become weak and sickly, and pine away and die in its infancy, from want of care, or of proper or sufficient food; yet it may have been *born* strong and healthy. Or, to make the analogy more close, it may have been born with some congenital disease (as the regenerate soul retains that of original sin), but still with constitutional powers given it by God, sufficient, if duly cherished and strengthened, to prevent any fatal effects from this infirmity; yet, if the requisite watchfulness and attention be relaxed, that disease may sap the powers of the constitution, poison all the fountains of health, and destroy the energies of life itself.

To apply these illustrations, we must remember that the work of spiritual *conversion*, the gradual conformation of the soul to the image of Christ, has yet to be done, when the work of spiritual *regeneration* is completed; and that the use and improvement of the initial grace, towards the accomplishment of that for which it was bestowed, constitutes the struggle of the Christian's

life, and involves his moral probation and responsibility. In entire consistency with this view is that series of correlative metaphors, by which the Bible describes the farther progress of the new spiritual life, subsequent to its commencement in the new birth: the "growth in "grace;" the "strengthening of the inner man;" the administration of various food adapted to various stages of growth—"milk" for the "babe," "strong meat" for the man; the provisions made, in various means and ordinances, for spiritual nurture, "till we all come unto a "perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the "fulness of Christ."¹ And in entire consistency with the same view is also the teaching of the Church of England; which, after the baptism of an infant, prays that God may "give His Holy Spirit, that he, *being* born "again², . . . may continue His servant and attain His "promise;" and, at his Confirmation that he may "daily "*increase* in God's Holy Spirit more and more:" which exhorts the sponsors to "call upon" the child "to hear "sermons," and to provide that he "may learn . . . all "things which a Christian ought to know and believe *to* "*his soul's health*:" which teaches the child itself that, though already made "the child of God," it is "not "able to serve Him" without farther gifts of "special "grace," to be called for at all times by diligent prayer; and finally, that "the strengthening and refreshing of "the soul," through the other Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is still "necessary to salvation," even to one who has been made a child of grace, and has received "a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness."

I have dwelt long, perhaps tediously, on this point,

because of its great importance in the present controversy, and because I know that nothing has so embarrassed and perplexed thoughtful minds on this subject, as the difficulty of conceiving that regeneration can have taken place in those, who have not their “fruits unto holiness and the end everlasting life.” After fairly weighing these various considerations, I see not how we can possibly admit that the word “regeneration,” *in the sense in which it is used by the Church of England in connection with Baptism*, necessarily implies a continuance in holiness, and a final attainment of salvation: and thus I hope I have shown that no just exception can be taken to the literal acceptation of the words “this child is by Baptism regenerate,” on the ground that the doctrine involves an unchristian trust in an *opus operatum*; or that it weakens the sense of moral responsibility; or that it interferes with the proper province of faith, with the sovereign will of God, or the alone-sufficient merits of Christ; or, finally, that it is inconsistent with the meaning attached by the Church to the word “regeneration.”

I now, then, turn to examine the theory, by means of which it is proposed to explain the words of the Service, so as to avoid the conclusion that all infants are, in and by Baptism, spiritually regenerated.

And here we first encounter the important fact, that we have to deal not with one theory, but with two; and these not only distinct from, but directly contradictory to each other. The one is, that the Church of England means, by her language, that all baptized infants are regenerate; but that regeneration is not a spiritual change, but a mere outward change of state—the mere fact of being within, instead of without, the pale of the

visible Church. The other is, that by regeneration she does mean a spiritual change, but not that *all* infants are partakers of it. Now, it is important to observe that the two do not form together an *accumulative* argument against the full literal sense, but that, on the contrary, each weakens the force of the other. What the one affirms, the other denies. They who hold the regeneration to be spiritual, deny that it is universal; and they who hold it to be universal, deny that it is spiritual; and thus, between the two, every part of the proposition, which they join in condemning, is separately conceded.

It is a still more remarkable fact, that many persons are to be found, who, in their anxiety to repudiate the literal sense, declare themselves willing to accept *either* of these two contradictory interpretations; thus showing that they have not proved to their own satisfaction the soundness of either.

On the first of these opinions, however, it is unnecessary to dwell: for when the Catechism teaches that “a new birth” is the inward and *spiritual* grace of Baptism, and when the Church, before the baptism of a child, offers the prayer that “he, coming to God’s holy baptism, *may* receive remission of his sins by *spiritual* regeneration;” and, after it, the thanksgiving that it *hath* pleased God to regenerate him *by His Holy Spirit*, — if it is maintained by any disputant that these expressions imply that regeneration is something merely outward and formal, not inward and spiritual, it seems useless to continue the argument.

Those, on the other hand, who agree in denying the universality of Infant Regeneration, by no means agree on the question *what it is* which forms the distinction

in favour of those particular infants who are regenerated: some referring it to God's arbitrary election; others to His prevision of the use which will hereafter be made of His grace; some to the faith of the parents; others to the sincerity of the sponsors; and others again to the earnestness of the prayers offered at the time of the baptism. The peculiar view of Mr. Gorham, condemned by the Bishop of Exeter, is, that no "child is "by Baptism regenerate," unless he receive Baptism rightly; and that none can receive it rightly, unless he be previously regenerated.

These "diversities of opinions" as to the proper mode of avoiding the force of the Baptismal Service, taken in its most natural sense, must incline us to suspect that there can be no very obvious and satisfactory way of doing it at all; and may well teach us to beware how we desert the safe anchorage of a literal interpretation, to cast ourselves on the wide sea of speculation and conjecture.

The discussion, however, of any of these theories will be found to involve certain fundamental questions, connected alike with all, to which I have already alluded in a former part of my argument, but which I purposely reserved for a fuller consideration in this place.

Of these questions the most important is, in what manner the Church of England declares regeneration to be connected with, and related to, Baptism; whether as a portion of the very essence of the Sacrament, or as a gift of God exterior to it, to which (wherever bestowed) when the Sacrament is *added*, it visibly betokens and formally ratifies it. The importance of the question consists in this, — that the former declaration is, in fact, a virtual declaration that all who receive the Sacrament

receive thereby the grace belonging to it; unless some specific limitation and exception be declared also, on the same authority on which the use of the Sacrament rests. For as Christ Himself has constituted the essence of the Sacrament, man is bound to believe that that essence remains entire in every case in which He Himself has not pronounced its dissolution. This would lead us, in the next place, to inquire whether such declared exception can have place in the case of infants; and if this be determined in the negative, the doctrine of the regeneration of every infant, duly baptized, will stand on a ground which no conjectural theory can be admitted to shake. On the other hand, the view that regeneration is not of the essence of Baptism, but something exterior to it, does not, we must admit, make the reception of the grace a necessary inference, in any case, from the reception of the Sacrament. To this inquiry I shall now proceed.

The strictest and most condensed definition of a Sacrament, contained in our Formularies, is that which is taught in the Church Catechism. Its several parts are found, in precisely equivalent terms, in the Articles of Religion, published many years previously; and it may therefore be regarded as a brief summary and exposition of what these Articles propound. As it has been sometimes said that the expressions in the Catechism are stronger than those in the Articles, I will here set down the two in parallel:—

CHURCH CATECHISM.

ARTICLE.

What meanest thou by this word Sacrament?

I mean an outward and visible *sign* of an *inward* and *spiritual* grace given unto us; *ordained by Christ Himself as a means whereby we receive the same*, and a *pledge to assure us thereof*.

What is the inward and spiritual grace [in Baptism]?

A death unto sin, and a *new birth* unto righteousness.

Sacraments ordained of Christ be certain sure witnesses and effectual signs (*efficacia signa*) *or grace by the which* (*per quæ*) *He [God] doth work invisibly in us.* Art. xxv.

Baptism is a sign [an effectual sign] of regeneration or *new birth*.

Here the Catechism declares the Sacrament to be a “sign,” “ordained by Christ Himself as a means whereby we receive an inward and spiritual grace:” the Article describes it as a “sign of grace ordained of Christ,” “effectual,” “by the which God doth work invisibly in us.” The Catechism calls it “a pledge to assure us thereof;” the Article, “a certain sure witness of grace.” The parallel expressions clearly mean the same thing; and each serves to illustrate the other.

To proceed, then, with the definition in the Catechism: we learn from it that the Sacrament of Baptism is not only “an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace,” but that it was “ordained by Christ Himself as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof.” These words clearly denote an *essential* relation between the outward sign and the inward grace; insomuch that, when the grace is not “received,” the sign loses its essential character, in respect of the purpose for which it was “ordained by Christ Himself.” Nor is it easy to conceive how it can be called “a pledge to assure us” of the grace, if, in

every case in which the sign is received by an infant, (and few other cases occur in the Church of England), the reception of the grace is to be considered, not, as in the case of the adult, contingent on a definite and intelligible condition, but *absolutely and entirely uncertain*; a doubt only to be solved in after years, according to *the judgment which men may form* of the spiritual condition of the child when grown up, and for the solution of which the assuring pledge of the Sacrament does not furnish the slightest key.

Yet still it may be said that the grace is not, according to this definition, necessarily a portion of the essence of the Sacrament: just as a fluid is no part of the conduit through which it flows; and the conduit may still be so called, with reference to its use and purpose, even when nothing is being actually conveyed through it. But this nice distinction is entirely obviated by another question and answer in the Catechism. “How many *parts* are there in a Sacrament? Two; the outward “visible sign, and the inward spiritual grace.” The grace then is, as well as the sign, *an essential part* of the Sacrament. Neither, in the absence of the other, constitutes, in the full sense of the word, *the Sacrament*. I am aware that it has been said, and truly said, that the word “sacrament,” in the two passages referred to, is used in two different senses; in the one, to denote the compound of the grace and the sign; in the other, the sign alone. It must, however, be remembered, that in the latter case it is so used in express connection with the *conveyance* of the grace: and, though there is some want of logical accuracy in the employment of this double sense, it must be regarded as a fortunate circumstance, since it shows the idea existing in the

mind of the writer of the inseparable connection — subject to the specific exceptions which I shall presently notice — between the sign and the grace. These are represented, in the one place, in their *separate* relation to the integrity of the Sacrament; in the other, in their *mutual* relation to each other. But the conclusion which I desire to press is, that the Church *never could have used* such language had she intended to express that the spiritual grace was a gift of God implanted in the receiver of the Sacrament, but *exterior* to the essence of the Sacrament itself. I will endeavour to show this by an illustration from the physical world; premising that I am not attempting thereby to illustrate a doctrine, but merely to exemplify a rule of language. If lime be cast into water, heat is produced: but the heat was not in the lime, but previously latent in the water. Now, would any scientific man, in describing lime, say that it was “a means whereby” water *received* heat? or that one of its “*parts*” was the heat thus received? On the other hand, if burning fuel were applied to the water, it would be quite true to say that the water “received” the heat by its “means;” and at least an intelligible statement, that the heat was a “part” of the burning substance. But whether this be a fair illustration or no, I cannot see how those who maintain that Baptism is *merely* a sign, or a seal, or an instrument “formally making over”¹ a grace previously granted

¹ I find this expression perpetually made use of in a late work by Mr. Goode, as furnishing the true description of the sacramental character of Baptism. I do not stop to ask him how he reconciles this with the words of the Article which describes Sacraments as “effectual signs of grace,” “by the which God doth *work* invisibly in us;” and with those of the Catechism, which declare that the “inward and spiritual grace” is one “*part*”

to the baptized person, can possibly meet the difficulty presented to them by the definite language of the Catechism and Articles to which I have referred. For even if the expression "a means whereby we receive the same" could be strained to such a sense, still Baptism

of the Sacrament. But I certainly wish that he had explained distinctly how he means to *apply* the figurative term which he employs. He gives two illustrations of his meaning, which lead us to two very different notions of it;—the case of a king receiving his crown in the ceremony of his coronation, and that of a man receiving an estate by a deed of conveyance. A king, as we know, is king *de jure* and *de facto* before he is formally crowned; nor is his coronation in any way necessary to confer his kingly power upon him. A man is *not* seised of an estate until the deed of conveyance has been signed and sealed. Which of these two ideas does Mr. Goode intend us to take? Is the child, or is he not, *possessed* of the grace of regeneration before his baptism, and without it? Is the grace *in* him or no? In the first case, I see not how we are to distinguish the *Sacrament* of Baptism from that which follows after it—the solemn reception of the child into the congregation, and the "signing of him with the sign of the cross," accompanied by the federal promises made in his name. It is the same ceremony in another form. In the other case, I see not how the view serves his purpose of showing that the reception of God's gift is in no way dependent on the will and act of man. For although, in some sense, the grace may have been *granted* to the child in the counsels of God, yet, if the actual *possession* and *enjoyment* of it is suspended until the administration of Baptism, does not God's blessing wait as much upon an act of man as it would if it were bestowed in and by Baptism? I am surprised, I confess, that Mr. Goode does not perceive that his suggestion about the will and act of man seeming to regulate that of God is only one of many forms of the same insoluble difficulty, arising out of our ignorance of the nature of that power of free agency in man, on which his moral probation and responsibility wholly depend. I defy any one to *reason* strictly on this question, without absolutely demonstrating the truth of the most extreme views of election and reprobation ever entertained by the most violent Calvinist. And when these conclusions are proved, the only answer to them is, that they do not consist with the declarations of Holy Writ, which treat man as a free agent. The fact is, that it is Reason which ties the knot of Calvinism, and Scripture does not untie, but cuts it.

would not be “ an effectual sign of grace, by the which “ God doth work invisibly in us;” nor would the grace be a “ part ” of the Sacrament, any more than a conveyed estate is a part of the deed of conveyance.

If, then, our Church declares that this essential union of the grace with the Sacrament has been effected by the ordinance of Christ Himself, she must be held to teach, by the mere virtue of that declaration, that the grace *invariably* accompanies the Sacrament, unless where *Scripture itself* has laid down a specific ground of exception. Now, as we have seen, Scripture speaks of no other pre-requisites to Baptism than faith and repentance; and our Church distinctly recognises these and no others, specifying faith in the Articles, and both in the Catechism. We are bound, therefore, by every principle of right interpretation, to believe that the want of these requisites forms the only hindrance to the beneficial effect of the Sacrament; and that nothing more is intended by the statement in the Twenty-fifth Article. “ Sacraments . . . in such only as “ worthily receive the same, have a wholesome effect “ or operation; but they that receive them unworthily, “ purchase to themselves damnation.”

Is it, then, intended in any way to include infants within these requirements, and so within this principle of exception? That such an intention is not *obvious*, that from the nature of the case it is not, *à priori*, *probable*, must, I think, be at once admitted. Some have, however, suggested that God may implant in infants a latent germ of faith and repentance, a prevenient grace to enable them to receive the Sacrament worthily; and that it is the bestowal of this grace on some infants, and the refusal of it to others, which constitutes a dis-

inction between their individual cases, analogous to that which is admitted to exist between those of adults. Mr. Gorham goes beyond this, and identifies this prevenient grace with regeneration itself, by which he entirely destroys the analogy contended for; since it is impossible, after reading the Service for the Baptism of Adults, to deny that *they* are presumed to have faith and repentance *before* they are regenerated. Witness the words of the exhortation, “Doubt ye not, therefore, “but earnestly believe, that He *will* favourably receive “these present persons *truly repenting and coming unto* “*Him by faith*; that He *will* grant them remission of “their sins and *bestow upon them the Holy Ghost*:” immediately after which follows the prayer, “Give “Thy Holy Spirit to these persons that they *may be* “*born again*.”

But can this explanation of the terms “worthily” and “unworthily” be in any way made to correspond with the descriptions and explanations given by the Church? First, we must observe that the “repent-
“ance” spoken of, as being “required of persons to be
“baptized,” is that “whereby they forsake sin,” that is, *actual* sin, for original sin is never forsaken, but “doth
“*remain*, yea in them that are regenerated:”¹ and the
“faith” is that “whereby they steadfastly believe the
“promises of God made to them in that Sacrament.” And these conditions, as the Church distinctly declares, infants “by reason of their tender age cannot perform.” Equally clear is it, that they cannot be included in the terms in which the *disqualifications* for Baptism are alluded to in the Article: for it is not only said that the Sacrament hath not “a wholesome effect or opera-

¹ Art. 9.

“tion” in them that “receive it unworthily,” but that they also “purchase to themselves damnation as St. Paul saith.” And these words “as St. Paul saith,” furnish the key to the true meaning of the Church : for St. Paul saith this but in one place ; and there, as we know, with specific reference to a wilful irreverent profanation of a Sacrament by the act of the recipient.

Now all this language is perfectly intelligible, when applied to adults, who are capable of lively faith and active repentance ; and who, if they come to Baptism professing these and having them not, are manifestly guilty of a wicked profanation of the Sacrament. But we are told that the Church has left us to deduce by analogy from hence her doctrine respecting infants. Is this a reasonable supposition ? Let it be remembered that, at the time when the Articles were published, the actual occurrence of Adult Baptism was so little contemplated by the framers of them, that there was not then, nor till nearly a hundred years afterwards, even a Service provided for the occasion. The Services were exclusively applicable to infants, while these expressions in the Articles were exclusively applicable to adults. To make the doctrine respecting Baptism complete, it was of course necessary to introduce these expressions, which are immediately deduced from Scripture ; but, had it been intended to include infants within them, would they have been put, as they are, into a form which so pointedly *excludes* them ? Surely, such terms would have been selected as would at least have left room for their adaptation to the two cases, according to the distinctive circumstances of each : and unworthy receivers would not be simply described as “purchasing to themselves damnation,” without some

qualifying word to confine the expression to wilful and sinful unworthiness. But all difficulty and inconsistency is at once removed, if we suppose the Church to mean that, as infants were incapable of unbelief and impenitence, they could not receive the Sacrament otherwise than "worthily." And this conclusion, as I will next proceed to show, necessarily follows from a consideration of the causes assigned by the Church of England for the practice of Infant Baptism.

The statement of the Twenty-seventh Article on this point is brief, but full of meaning. "The baptism of young children is in anywise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ." It is to "the institution of Christ," then, and to that alone, that we are to look; and the Baptismal Service lays down for us the broad principles, deduced from a review of this institution, on which the practice of the Church is founded:—

1. The universality of original sin.
2. The universality of the Atonement made by the death of Christ.
3. The universality of Christ's own declaration of the need of being born of water and the Spirit, in order to enter into the kingdom of God.
4. The universality of Christ's own command to baptize.

These principles are thus declared:—

"Forasmuch as *all* men are conceived and born in sin; and that our Saviour Christ saith, None can enter into the kingdom of God except he be regenerate, and born anew of water and of the Holy Ghost; I beseech you to call upon God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that of His bounteous mercy

“He will grant to *this child* that thing which by nature he cannot have; that he may be baptized with water and the Holy Ghost.”

“Almighty, everliving God, whose most dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of *our* sins, did shed out of His most precious side both water and blood; and gave commandment to His disciples, that they should go teach *all nations*, and baptize them, . . . grant that *this child* now to be baptized . . . may receive the fulness of thy grace.”

Here the *particular* case of the infant is based throughout upon the *universal* rules laid down in Scripture and by Christ Himself, which of course are quite sufficient, *primâ facie*, and until some special exception be shown, to authorize, *without further proof*, the statement that “the baptism of young children” is “most agreeable with the institution of Christ.” The only possible doubt that could be entertained would be one arising from the nature of the case, that is, from the tender years and unconsciousness of the infant; and to meet this, our Church proceeds to show the *special* favour manifested by Jesus Christ towards little children, *as such*, from the words of the Gospel written by St. Mark, at the 10th chapter, at the 13th verse. I need hardly cite the passage, nor do I intend to offer any comment of my own upon it: it is with that which the Church has made that we are concerned; and which is to be found partly in the Service for Public Baptism, partly in that for receiving into the congregation children who have been privately baptized. The points insisted on, as deduced from the analogy furnished by this passage, are, that our Saviour Christ “commanded the children to be brought unto him;” “blamed those

“ that would have kept them from him ;” “ exhorteth
 “ all men to follow their innocency ;” and, finally, “ by
 “ His outward gesture and deed declared his good will
 “ towards them ;” the latter words suggesting an
 analogy with the Sacrament, as a “ sign ” and “ sure
 “ witness of God’s good will,” and the inference that, if
 he gave them one such testimony, he would not refuse
 them another. And the general conclusion drawn is,
 that “ our Lord Jesus Christ doth not deny His grace
 “ and mercy unto such infants, but most lovingly doth
 “ call them unto Him ;” and that we are not to
 “ doubt, but earnestly believe that he will likewise
 “ favourably receive *this present infant* ; that He will
 “ embrace *him* with the arms of His mercy.”

Now of all these grounds, alleged for the duty and
 practice of Infant Baptism, there is not one which in-
 volves even the possibility of a difference between one
 infant and another. As respects the general grounds,
 it is manifest that they are equally included in the
 universal fact of original sin, in the universal need of
 regeneration, and in the universal command to baptize
 all nations. The only special ground alleged is “ their
 “ innocency ;” that is, of actual sin, for of original sin
 they are not innocent : and in this innocency no one, I
 presume, will deny that they all equally share.

If we examine the case of adults in the same way,
 we shall find the precise difference made in the terms
 of the Service, which we should expect in consequence
 of the intervention of actual sin between the period of
 infantine “ innocency ” and that of Baptism. In that
 Service, to the words “ forasmuch as all men are con-
 “ ceived and born in sin,” we find the following added :
 “ and that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and they

“ that are in the flesh cannot please God, but *live in sin*,
 “ *committing many actual transgressions.*” There, too,
 are introduced the passages from Scripture, which
 declare the necessity of repentance and faith for those
 who come to Baptism. “ He that *believeth* and is bap-
 “ tized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall
 “ be damned :” “ *Repent* and be baptized, every one of
 “ you, for the remission of sins ; *and* ye shall receive the
 “ gift of the Holy Ghost.” And then that specific *hypo-*
thesis, on which all the language of *this* service is justly
 considered to be founded, is expressly introduced :
 “ Doubt ye not, therefore, but earnestly believe that
 “ He will favourably receive these present persons, *truly*
 “ *repenting and coming unto Him by faith.*” Now all
 this, *omitted* in the case of infants and *specially added*
 in the case of adults, exactly consists with the view
 which I have taken of the exclusive application to adults
 of the disqualifying clause in the Twenty-fifth Article.
 And yet, with all this before our eyes, we are told that,
 because the general declarations as to the regeneration
 of adults, contained in the Service provided for them,
 are to be understood conditionally, that is, as being
 dependent on the hypothesis, *expressly introduced*, that
 they are “ truly repenting and coming unto God by
 “ faith,” we are bound, according to the same rule, to
 attach to the similar declarations respecting infants a
 conditional character, which is nowhere expressed or
 even hinted at in the Service provided for *them* !

But here we are met by the assertion, that there is
 yet one other ground which we have not mentioned, on
 which the Church baptizes infants ; namely, the *promise*
 of faith and repentance made for them by their sponsors.
 And this, it is said, is proved by the question, “ *Why*

“ then are infants baptized, when by reason of their tender age they cannot perform them [faith and repentance] ? ” and its answer, “ Because they promise them both by their sureties ; which promise, when they come to age, themselves are bound to perform.” Here, it is said, is the link which connects the infant with the prerequisites of faith and repentance ; and here enters an element of uncertainty with respect to an infant’s regeneration, corresponding with that which exists in the case of an adult. For the sponsors who promise may not mean what they say ; and the infant afterwards may never perform the promises made for it. I must entreat the patience of my readers while I enter into what may perhaps prove a tedious discussion of this point.

Two of those theories, to which I have before referred as having been advanced in support of the opinion that all infants are not alike regenerated in Baptism, are involved in this discussion : the one referring to the qualifications of the sponsors, the other to the subsequent performance of the promise by the infant himself. The latter of these we may at once dispose of, as not bearing, as is pretended, the slightest analogy to the case of the adult ; but rather destroying all analogy between the cases. For, when we pronounce the *adult* regenerate, it is on the hypothesis of the truth of his *present profession*, not on that of his *future perseverance* in acting upon it. That perseverance is to arise out of a new source, not in existence when he made the profession ; namely, the regenerating grace which he is about to receive in his baptism. And so, to carry out the analogy, it would be on the hypothesis that the promise is sincerely made *at the time*, not that it *will be hereafter adhered to* (which it cannot be, unless by the aid of re-

generating grace), that we pronounce the infant regenerate. In each case, *the act* of regeneration would depend on the reality of *present professions*; *the future benefits* of that act on the *proper use* made of the grace in *the subsequent performance* of them. We may therefore confine our inquiry to the opinion, that the regeneration of the child depends on the sincerity of the sponsorial promise; and that the child is baptized *because* of that promise.

Now the first thing which strikes us, in entering on this question, is the indisputable fact that sponsions *formed no part of "the institution of Christ;"* and therefore cannot be contemplated in the words of the Article, which pronounces that the baptism of young children is to be retained in the Church, as being most agreeable to that institution. To say that they were a *necessary* adjunct to the Sacrament, in order to bring infants within the scope of the ordinance, would be in effect to say that *the Church* has devised a means whereby a class of persons become admissible to Baptism, who were not so under its original institution. This were surely nothing less than impiety, especially when we remember how strictly the Church of England confines the very notion of a Sacrament to that which was "ordained by Christ Himself." What Christ made the Sacrament, such and no other must it be *now*. If *He* did not intend the admission of infants, sponsions cannot make them admissible: if *He did*, sponsions cannot be *necessary* to make them so.

But if it be impious to suppose that a human ordinance could *enlarge* the benefits of a Divine one, how much more so to say that it could *contract* them. And yet this must be said, if we are to hold that the benefits

of Baptism to an infant in any way whatever depend upon any act, word, or thought of its sponsors—the creatures of an ecclesiastical rule, wise indeed and useful, but still not “ordained by Christ,” or prescribed in Holy Writ. If this could be conceived possible, how unnatural the act of the Church in thus *creating* a new peril for the souls of her children during their unconscious infancy!

Yet still it may be asked, If this sentence in the Catechism, which speaks of the promise of sponsors, be not connected with the subject of qualification or disqualification for the reception of sacramental grace, what is its meaning and object? The solution of this question, to which my own reflections have led me, may not be satisfactory to others, but may still be deemed not unworthy of consideration.

Baptism is represented to us, in the Formularies of our Church, in the double character of a Sacrament and of a covenant. It has often been said that the term “sacrament” itself implies both these ideas, since the word “sacramentum,” in its classical use, signifies an oath of military service. But this remark is irrelevant to the present point, since the Church has strictly confined *the meaning of the word* to the idea of an outward sign conveying an inward grace; so that the sacramental and federal characters of Baptism are distinct from each other. The administration of the rite is at once the means of conveying the sacramental grace, and of admitting the recipient into the covenant. The Sacrament and the covenant are inseparable, even in idea, from each other; since the whole tenor of Scripture shows that every gift on the part of God infers a corresponding duty on the part of man. The professions and sponsions, there-

fore, required by the Church, add nothing new to the "institution of Christ." They do not *create* the baptismal obligations, but are only the prescribed mode of publicly and formally *recognising* them. It would clearly be a reversal of the order of God's dispensations, to say that the bestowal of sacramental grace is in any way contingent or dependent on the entrance into the baptismal covenant. Men are not regenerated because they have incurred federal duties to God, but they incur these duties by virtue of their regeneration. Regeneration is the free gift of God, and can have no antecedent cause, except His own will. The administration of the outward sign is *His* command. The conveyance of the inward grace is the act of *His* simple mercy and power. As such we recognise it when we pray for the infant, that God, *of his bounteous mercy*, will grant unto him that thing which by nature he cannot have. Neither, then, can the regeneration of the child depend on the *promise* made by its sureties, which is merely a recognition of the obligations of the covenant. The sacramental gift is the *origin* and *source* of the federal bond, and cannot, therefore, depend upon it as its *condition*. What, then, means the pre-requirement of faith and repentance? The answer seems to be this. The *absence* of faith and repentance in an *adult*, being in its own nature *sinful*, operates as a double disqualification for Baptism. It unfits him alike for seeking sacramental grace and for entering into covenant with God. In the case of *infants*, such defect is *not* sinful, and, as I hope I have already shown by various proofs, does not disqualify them for receiving sacramental grace. Yet still it might be a question whether it did not unfit them for *entering into the*

covenant of Baptism; and this, as it appears to me, is the difficulty which our Church intends to anticipate, in the question and answer which we are considering. “Why, *then*, are infants baptized, when by reason of their tender age they cannot perform them?” The question clearly, from its very form, is not *on what grounds* the Church baptizes infants, but how it is that the acknowledged *want* of faith and repentance does not operate as an insuperable *bar* to their being *baptized*, not to their being *regenerated* if baptized. And the spirit of the answer seems to be, ‘It is true that they cannot *now* perform these requirements; but neither are they called upon now to *perform* them, as adults are, whose covenant duties commence *coterminously* with their baptism. Like the adult, they are brought by Baptism under a covenant which necessarily includes faith and repentance. Like the adult, they enter into a formal profession and recognition of that covenant, through the “promises” made “by their sureties.” Like him, too, they are “bound,” as soon as they are able, “to perform” what is then promised in their names. Their federal position, therefore, is as complete in all its parts as that of the adult, and as it is most agreeable to the institution of Christ that they shall be baptized, so no valid objection to their baptism can be established on the ground suggested by the question.’

Upon the whole, then, I think it must appear that the public sponsions required by the Church are not necessary accompaniments, as they are unquestionably not constituent parts, of the Ordinance of Christ,—that the gift of sacramental grace is not, therefore, conditionally connected with them, and that they are not

absolutely required even to complete the federal position of the child brought to Baptism. And this view receives a strong corroboration from the language and the practice of the Church herself, with reference to cases of private Baptism. Here, though the Rubrics are exceedingly copious and minute, the subject of the sponsions is entirely passed over in them. There is no allusion to the omission of them on account of the emergency,—no declaration of its being necessary, or even important, to supply the omission afterwards, if the child afterwards live. In that case, its being brought to the Church is merely said to be “*expedient* ;” partly, “ that the congregation may be certified of the true “ form of Baptism before privately used ;” partly, that the child may be publicly received as one of the flock of true Christian people. On that occasion it is solemnly declared that the child, “ being born in original sin and in “ the wrath of God, *is now*, by the laver of regeneration “ in baptism, received into the number of the children of “ God and heirs of everlasting life.” The same passage from the Gospel is then read, as in the Service for Public Baptism ; and the same commentary made upon it, except that the congregation are exhorted “ earnestly “ to believe”—not that God “ *will* receive,” but—that “ He *hath* favourably received” the infant, and *hath* “ “ embraced him with His mercy.” And then follow the sponsions, without a single prefatory remark : a silence which would be wholly unaccountable—in this exceptional case, in which these sponsions *follow*, instead of preceding, the Baptism, and all the enunciations of its blessings *already received*—had it been intended to teach that the reception of these blessings was essentially connected with them. The true explanation of this, doubt-

less, is, that the Church considers these promises and engagements *implied*, when the child is baptized.¹ And this is precisely what I have been contending for; but the argument makes directly against the very point which it is usually advanced to prove. For it shows that the Church does not associate these promises with *any particular sponsors*; and that, consequently, no connection between their personal qualifications² and the regeneration of the infant was ever contemplated by the Church.

The same argument, which has been applied to sponsors, may be applied also to the theory which makes the benefit of the Sacrament dependent on the earnestness of the prayers of the congregation. The presence of a congregation was not made a *necessary* adjunct to "the institution of Christ," by Him who ordained the Sacrament. The Æthiopian eunuch was

¹ The Judicial Committee in their judgment adopt this view, but turn the argument to a different purpose. "Any other conclusion," they say, "would be an argument to prove that none but the imperfect and incomplete ceremony allowed in the exceptional case *would be necessary in any case.*" If they mean by this word "ceremony" the sacrament of Baptism, they should be reminded that it is *not* "imperfect and incomplete" without the sponsions, which are no part of Christ's ordinance; and that the administration of the water, with the proper form of words, *is all* that is "necessary in *any case.*" If, on the other hand, they mean those parts of the ceremony which are of merely ecclesiastical appointment, then I see not how *their* incompleteness can affect the benefits of that Sacrament, the administration of which is already complete.

² There is a requirement in the Canons that they shall be communicants, which is quite consistent with the view which ought to be taken of the solemn character of their office; but I never yet heard of any one venturing on so extravagant a suggestion, as that the benefits of one Sacrament to an infant are contingent on the reception of the other Sacrament by its sponsors. If it were so, how wicked the clergyman who permits the Canon to be violated!

baptized without a single witness to the act, save the minister of it. If, then, the addition of a congregation could introduce with it a risk to the infant of losing the regenerating effect of his baptism, again I say how unnatural the act of the Church in directing that Baptism shall be administered when the most number of people come together ! But in truth the Church has virtually declared her own mind on this point. There are three parties supposed to be present and acting at the baptism of a child : the congregation, the sponsors, and the Minister. With respect to the latter, it was not unnatural that a question should arise, whether, if he were a wicked man, his wickedness would hinder the effect of the Sacrament ; and in the Twenty-sixth Article it is expressly declared, with respect to such Ministers, that “ the effect of Christ’s ordinance is not taken away by “ their wickedness :” since the Sacraments “ be effectual “ because of Christ’s institution and promise ;”—a general principle, which will apply with equal force and propriety to both the other cases.

On the question whether the effect of the Sacrament depends on the faith of the parents—the only one of those theories before enumerated, which I have yet to notice—very little need be said. To pass over the many difficulties and absurdities, which lie upon the very face of such an assertion, it may be sufficient to say simply, that there is not one word in Scripture, nor in the Formularies of the Church, to give even a colour to such a supposition. True it is that the faith of one man is said indirectly, as in prayer, to procure blessings for another. This is an enlargement of mercy, entirely consistent with all that the Scripture teaches us of God. But we are nowhere taught that the *want* of such faith

will *hinder* the good of another, who hinders it not by his own wilfulness. God has, indeed, declared that He “visiteth the sins of the fathers upon the children, unto “the third and fourth generation *of them that hate him.*” But, when the house of Israel perverted these words to mean that the children should share in their fathers’ punishment, where they shared not in their sin, and hence complained that “the way of the Lord was not “equal,” God answered them by His Prophet, “The son “shall *not* bear the iniquity of his father;” “The soul “that *sinneth* it shall die.” To these remarks I cannot help adding, that I see not how any man, holding the theory which I have been considering, can possibly desire to enter the Ministry of the Church of England. In the exercise of his office, he must often be called upon to baptize children whose parents are *notoriously* unfaithful professors, living in open profligacy and irreligion. Of every one of these children he will be obliged to say, “This child is regenerate.” Here there is no room for any hypothesis, except that his own theory is wrong. He states that as a *fact*, which he believes to be a *falsehood*.

There is but one point more, on which I desire briefly to touch: the opinion, namely, that the universal declarations of the Church as to the regeneration of infants are made in her *charity*, and not in her *faith*; nay, that her charity is, in this instance, opposed to her faith, since faith is only concerned with that which is *true*, and the Church, it is said, does not hold it to be true that all infants are “by baptism regenerate.” The argument always advanced in support of this theory is, that there is a charitable supposition pervading all the Services of the Church, and to be applied to all statements in them,

which affirm, in universal terms, any act or promise of Divine goodness to man. Now, the fallacy of this argument lies simply in this fact, that every one of the cases adduced, *except that under consideration*, the case of Infant Regeneration, are cases of capable and responsible agents, in relation to whom some gift or promise of God is referred to, *which is known from Scripture* to be conditional upon some act of their own.¹ Here faith and charity act together, but they are not opposed to each other. Faith is engaged with the promise of God; charity with the act of man. We *believe* undoubtingly that the promise of God is fulfilled, *if* the condition be; we *hope*, though not of course undoubtingly, that the condition *is* fulfilled. But in the case of Infant Baptism, with the exception of the due administration of the rite, the only agency, of which Scripture speaks, is the agency of *God*; and this is the object of faith, not of charity. Yet those who maintain the theory of ‘a charitable hypothesis,’ tell us, that while we are to *believe* that *some* infants only are regenerated in Baptism, we are *charitably to suppose* that *all* are: thus making man’s charity larger than God’s goodness! Surely it had been easy to avoid this strange perplexity of ideas, by adopting a somewhat different form of language, and, for the words “*seeing* now that this child *is* regenerate,” substituting “*hoping* now that this child *may be* among those whom God hath been pleased to regenerate.” Perhaps, however, the most direct way

¹ When we speak of any such act being “our own,” we merely employ a phrase to distinguish that which God *requires from* us from that which He *does to* us: without of course disparaging the doctrine that “all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed” from Him alone.

of dealing with the question will be, to take the expressions in the Prayer Book, which are said to be analogous to those in the service for Infant Baptism; to set out in full the charitable hypothesis, which the former involve; and then to try to express, in the same form, the corresponding hypothesis said to be involved in the latter. It will be found, I think, that the analogy fails in the precise point on which it is needed. Let the following serve as a specimen: '*Through faith in God* ' we *believe* that this adult person has been regenerated, ' *if* he has now come to Baptism truly repenting and ' believing; and, *in charity towards him*, we *suppose* that ' he does both repent and believe.' 'Through faith in ' God, we believe that he, whom we bury¹, rests in God, ' *if* he died in penitence and in reliance on his Saviour's ' mercy; and, in charity towards him, we hope that he ' did die in that condition.' This is clear and intelligible; but how are we to proceed in the next case? 'Through ' faith in God, we believe that this infant now baptized ' is by Baptism regenerate, *if* he . . . and, in charity ' towards him, we suppose that he . . . ' I confess that I have always been, and still am, unable to fill up

¹ I may here remind the reader of what has been frequently mentioned by others in treating on the subject of our Burial Service; that it is drawn up on the hypothesis that all notorious evilivers are excommunicated until they repent; and as it is directed that the Service shall not be used for any that die unbaptized or excommunicate, it must be understood as not contemplating the cases of any who have not had remission of original sin in Baptism, and of actual sin on repentance. This often creates, in days in which excommunication is not practised, a real difficulty with respect to the use of the Service, which is not fairly solved by straining the word "hope," and the expression "it hath pleased God of His infinite mercy to take unto Himself the soul of our dear brother," to meanings which do not seem to have been in the contemplation of the compilers of our Formularies.

these blanks, on any Scriptural authority, or on any principle of Reason. I may add that, though I have conversed with those who hold strongly the theory of the 'charitable hypothesis,' I have never met with one who could do it for me.

With one more argument I will close my remarks on this head. An infant is baptized, and thereupon declared to be "regenerate," and "received as God's "own child by adoption." If he dies in manhood, we all admit that, since he must have committed actual sin in the interval, his salvation cannot be pronounced upon, unless upon a charitable supposition respecting the reality of his repentance. If now the view, which I have been contending for, be the true one, namely, that all ground for such uncertainty and charitable hypothesis is *introduced subsequently to Baptism, by actual sin and by that alone*, then we should expect to find that, if the salvation of such an one were spoken of, on the supposition of his dying in infancy, and before it is possible that actual sin should be committed, it would be spoken of in terms of absolute certainty. And this is precisely what we *do* find ; for our Church has placed on record her judgment upon the mind of Scripture respecting this case. "It is *certain*, by God's Word, "that children who are baptized, dying before they "commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved."

Let me now briefly recapitulate the substance of the preceding argument.

It has been my object first to show that the doctrine of the universal regeneration of infants in Baptism "*may be proved* by Holy Scripture ;" not by single passages, but by the combined result of many, fairly interpreted and carefully viewed in connection with each other ; I

then noticed the fact, that, though this deduction from Scripture entirely approved itself to the private judgment of some, it is rejected by that of others ; and that thus a controversy of faith arises, on which, as Churchmen, we are bound to submit to the authoritative arbitration of the Church. I next cited passages from our Formularies, which, taken in their plain, grammatical, and natural sense, affirm the very same conclusion, as deduced from the same passages of Scripture, which I had cited in its support ; and I referred to many learned and elaborate investigations for the fact that this conclusion harmonises also with all that can be gathered from the earliest Christian Writers, as to the doctrine of the primitive Catholic Church. Having thus exhibited the nature of the argument maintained on one side of the question, I next proceeded to consider that which has been advanced on the other. And I first remarked that those who were contented to rest upon the literal and most obvious sense of the language of the Church, have a right, *without further proving their case*, to ask for the *objections*, which are raised to an interpretation, which *primâ facie*, and in default of proof to the contrary, must be considered the right one. I then enumerated and discussed separately the general reasons, which have been alleged by various persons, for rejecting as untrue the literal construction of the passages in question ; and, finally, I endeavoured to examine *seriatim* the various theories, which have been proposed for giving a different sense to those passages from that which would naturally suggest itself to a simple mind ; and to test those theories by the language of the Church, employed in other places in relation to the subject.

That the reasonings and conclusions which I have advanced in the course of this discussion will be satisfactory to all my readers, I have not, of course, the presumption to suppose. But I may at least request that the whole may not be rejected on the ground of partial objections, and without considering whether such faults as my argument may exhibit do really vitiate the substance of the general result. One answer to what I have written I think I have a fair right to deprecate. There are some, who are fond of professing a determination to eschew all inquiries into uninspired documents, and to content themselves with a simple faith in the Holy Scriptures. I would not be understood as speaking harshly of the conscientious views of any person, however opposed to my own; but I would ask such persons seriously to consider whether, in identifying their own private interpretation of Scripture with Scripture *itself*, they are not exercising, instead of 'simple faith,' a too presumptuous self-confidence. I would ask them candidly to say whether, in sober and honest truth, such a determination does not in fact amount to this: 'I have formed a strong opinion as to the true doctrine of Baptism to be deduced from Holy Scripture. A Christian brother has formed another and an opposite one. One of these must be erroneous; and, as a Churchman, I am called upon to admit that the Church alone "hath authority" to arbitrate between them. *But I decline this arbitration*; and I prefer rather, when I compare together the two opposite doctrines thus deduced from Holy Scripture, to determine, without farther inquiry, that my own is right and my opponent's wrong.'

Among the various topics, which I have touched upon

as connected with this controversy, it will be observed that there is one which I have not included, but which has been largely treated and strongly insisted on by others. I mean the tone of the Theology prevalent in England at the time of our Reformation; and the manner in which certain of the divines of that age have expressed themselves, in their own writings, on the subjects of Baptism and Regeneration. Of the argument drawn from this source against the doctrines which I have been advocating, I may, perhaps, be allowed to consider the work of Mr. Goode on the "Effects of Infant Baptism" as a fair representative. It is not because I do not think that at least an equally good case might be made out for the other side, on the very same ground, and often out of the writings of the very same persons, that I have passed over this argument; but because I repudiate the fundamental principle on which Mr. Goode's book is founded, that the true interpretation of the Formularies of the Reformed Church of England is to be sought in the private opinions of cotemporaneous writers; or even in the private opinions, *as such*, of the compilers themselves. I cannot hesitate to say that those who drew up these documents have no claim whatever, beyond that of other equally pious and learned men, to our deference as Churchmen, *except* as the presumed exponents of the Catholic Doctrine of the Primitive Church. Mr. Goode tells us much of the views of certain foreign theologians, who, because they were admired, patronised, and consulted, by our own Reformers, must, he thinks, be considered as in some degree representing their opinions, and *therefore* the true meaning of the Formularies of our Church. He speaks much also of the

general Calvinistic tone of our leading divines at the time of the Reformation ; amongst whom he labours to include the individuals who were concerned in drawing up the Formularies : and he lays down in the following terms the general principle, upon which his argument upon this head proceeds : — “ The object which I have in view is simply this, to prove, by showing the general tone and character of the theology of our early divines of the Reformed School, what modern school among us approaches the nearest to their standard, and consequently to the intended meaning of the Formularies they drew up. . . . In fact, if it shall appear (and I believe it to be undeniable) that their doctrine was, in the most important points, what is now called ‘ Calvinistic,’ there is, or ought to be, an end to the controversy as to the interpretation they intended to be given to our Formularies, both as it respects Baptism and several other points.”¹

The copious extracts, which he has so industriously collected from the writings of that age, are divisible into various classes, bearing with very different and unequal force on the conclusion, which he desires to establish respecting the meaning of the Church Formularies. It would be, I imagine, superfluous to dwell on the inconclusiveness of those taken from the works of foreign divines, because it may be fairly supposed that the author himself regards them rather as subsidiary to his proof, than as a substantial part of it. To attempt to adduce the meaning of our Baptismal Services from the fact of Archbishop Cranmer having appointed Peter Martyr to a Professorship, would be as reasonable, as for a

¹ Goode's "Effects of Infant Baptism," p. 38.

Writer three hundred years after the present time to take the statement of the present Archbishop of Canterbury, —that the “believers in Calvin were never allowed to “introduce their subtleties into her intelligible and “rational Formularies;” and that “*therefore* we are “instructed to declare that those who are devoted to “Christ as infants by Baptism are regenerate,”—and to argue that the Archbishop could not mean what he seems to say, because he was known to have appointed to the rectory of Allhallows a clergyman, who held that the “undeniable” Calvinism of the Reformers showed incontrovertibly the “interpretation they *intended* to “be given to our Formularies.”

Another class of Mr. Goode's citations does no more than confine the benefits of Baptism to those who receive it worthily; a statement precisely agreeing with the words of the Twenty-seventh Article, and perfectly consistent (as I have elsewhere shewn) with the views of those, who consider that the innocence of actual sin constitutes, in all infants alike, a worthy reception.

A third class exhibits the word “regeneration” used in a sense evidently less precise, or rather less simple, than that in which it is used in the Baptismal Service; a sense, in fact, compounded of the two ideas of God's first act of communicating the new birth, and of the continuing manifestation of its effects in the regenerate. Of this I have spoken at large in another place.¹

A fourth class contains merely evidence that the writers believed generally in the Calvinistic theories of Predestination and Election; from which their views on the particular subject of Infant Baptism are *inferred* by

¹ Page 41, *et seq.*

Mr. Goode as a *necessary* consequence ; but which may be shown, both from theory and from fact, to be consistent with the full view of Baptismal Regeneration for which I have contended ; for the theory may be that men are predestinated and elected to a *persevering and saving use* of regenerating grace ; which may therefore, consistently with this view, be held to be bestowed on others who are *not* elect. And it is a fact beyond dispute, that men holding the Calvinistic doctrine of absolute decrees have also held the universality of Regeneration in Infant Baptism.¹

When all these various passages are abstracted from the book, the number of those bearing directly on the point in question will be found to be comparatively small ; and none of them affording direct proof that any of those, who were actually engaged in framing our Formularies, held any opinion inconsistent with the view which it is the object of Mr. Goode to oppose.

But I repeat that I purposely abstain from discussing these topics ; because, whatever the result of that discussion, I must still always maintain the principle that, where the authorized Formularies of a branch of the Catholic Church, in their most simple and natural sense, affirm any primitive Catholic doctrine, no one has a right to look out of these to the opinion of any modern " school of theology " for a mode of interpreting them in a manner inconsistent with that doctrine. I will go farther than this : I will say that, if Mr. Goode were to discover any private writing of the actual framers of our Formularies, in which they distinctly declared that they adopted the language of the Baptismal Services, because

¹ See Wilberforce on the Doctrine of Holy Baptism, p. 266, &c., and Appendix.

of its agreement with the teaching of the primitive Church, but that, from a regard to the opinions of others, or even to their own, they had purposely left it open also to a different interpretation,—I think that the doctrine of the Church of England would not be affected by that circumstance ; that she might be contented with knowing that the Catholic doctrine *was expressed* ; and would be bound to disregard any farther private intention on the part of the Reformers. I will say also that, if it could be proved that they determined, even *without* intending such a reservation, to express fully what they found to be the Catholic doctrine, though their own private judgment was disposed to a more modified statement, I should not be among those who would “ attribute to them shameless effrontery, and gross and scandalous dishonesty ; ”¹ but should be disposed to view their conduct in a very different light. In the proceedings of our Courts of Law I have sometimes been struck with language to the following purport from some one of our eminent judges : — ‘ If I were to determine this case according to the bias of my own mind, such and such would be my decision : but I am sitting here to expound and lay down the law, according to the testimony of its most accredited authorities ; and seeing that the leaning of that testimony is against the view, which I should otherwise be disposed to take, I pronounce my judgment accordingly.’ I confess that, on such occasions, instead of thinking meanly of the judge who could so speak, I have only felt the more impressed with a reverence for the integrity of the judicial character, and the paramount majesty of the English law. And

¹ Charge of the Archbishop of York, 1849, p. 28.

so I should think of our Reformers, were I to find them thus separating the two characters, which they united in themselves, as individual theologians, and as the accredited restorers of the English Church to the primitive system of Catholic Teaching. I need scarcely repeat that I have not yet seen it proved that they did in reality hold any private opinions inconsistent with that Teaching.

But I must draw these pages to a conclusion: though I cannot do so, without venturing on a few general remarks on the position, in which the Church is at present placed through the recent judgment in the case of Mr. Gorham.

That position may be thus described: Five lay members of her Majesty's Privy Council — a sixth being dissentient — have, with the concurrence of two out of three Prelates, determined, 1st. That the Formularies of the Church of England, according to their strictly legal construction, do not prove that the Church *holds* any positive or definite doctrine whatever on the question whether spiritual regeneration be, by the ordinance of Christ, essentially connected with the Sacrament of Baptism: 2dly. That in the case of infants, — from which all hypothesis of wilful sin and unbelief in the recipient is necessarily excluded, — though the Church enjoins her ministers to pronounce that each infant “is by baptism regenerate,” she does not *authorize* them to teach that such infant really has been, or ever will be regenerated; or to say whether, if regenerated, he be so by Baptism; or whether, at the time of, or before, or after the administration of the Sacrament.

From this state of the case various inferences have been, sometimes perhaps too hastily, deduced.

It has been said that, if there be, as all historical

testimony declares, a positive Catholic doctrine on this subject, this decision of the Court virtually pronounces that the Church of England has receded from Catholic ground, and thus *renders* her an unsound member of the Universal Church. Happily, this grave apprehension may be easily shown to be without foundation. If, indeed, the Church were, by any synodical act, so to recognise this judicial decision as to declare authoritatively that she holds, and intends to hold, such neutral ground on the point in question, the effect would undoubtedly be to condemn herself as uncatholic. But the present case is a very different one. Indeed, the judges themselves, in pronouncing their decision, expressly declared that they excluded from their consideration the question, What doctrine, or whether any, was taught on the point in the Bible, or maintained in the Catholic Church. Their decision, therefore, no more determines, or pretends to determine, the question of our Church's Catholicity on this subject, than a Court of Law, deciding as to a legal construction of an Act of Parliament, would pretend to determine whether the mind of the Legislature was in accordance with the principles of Magna Charta.

But still it may be said by some that, as the law prevents any particular interpretation of the Formularies on the point in question being *authoritatively enforced*, our Church is practically precluded from bearing testimony to her own Catholic character; and that it is therefore desirable that she should take immediate steps for procuring a synodical declaration as to what is the Catholic doctrine on the subject, and, therefore, her own.

I confess myself to be one of those who can neither assent to this premise, nor to this conclusion.

In the first place, it is not true that the law has left no way, in which the Church may enforce a definite interpretation of her Formularies on this subject. In the case of admission to Holy Orders, I have already observed that there is an independent jurisdiction vested in the Bishop, with which no Court can interfere. It is so likewise in the revocation of the licences of stipendiary Curates (where an appeal lies only to the Archbishop), and also, I believe, of the Incumbents of Proprietary Chapels. On the latter subject, the judgment given in the case of *Hodgson v. Dillon* by Dr. Lushington (one of the judges who concurred in the late decision of the Judicial Committee) completely vindicates the principle for which I am contending; for he states that a Bishop is not only permitted, but “that he is bound, according to the urgency of the case, to revoke such a licence, *if he thinks that the good of the Church requires it.*” He adds, “On general principles I am of opinion that the Bishop has *authority* to revoke such a licence as this *according to his own discretion.*” He has exercised that discretion in this case, a discretion *not examinable by me.*”¹

Of course I am not here presuming to speak on the *duties* of Bishops. I speak only of their *power*; in order to show, for the purpose of my argument, that if they were in such cases to enforce one definite interpretation of the Baptismal Services, on the avowed grounds that it alone harmonises with the teaching of the Primitive Church, they would not only be severally promul-

¹ *Hodgson v. Dillon*, 2 Curteis, 391.

gating a formal and authoritative decision, directly sanctioned by the law, but one not really inconsistent with the opposite decision of a Court, which *professedly* rejects all reference to the Catholic principle of interpretation. Thus might a regular and public testimony be legally borne to the Catholic character of the Church of England until the holding of a National Synod.

The subject of convening such a Synod, for the purpose of pronouncing an authoritative judgment on the controverted point, is a very delicate and painful one to deal with: for it involves the delicate and painful question, whether the present state of our Church be such that the determination of so momentous a point could be safely committed to it. It is true that, in such a work, our trust must be not in man but in God. Yet even now a judgment of God may be upon us; and an inability for this work may be among its signs. Disunion is not only a sin in itself, but is a punishment also for other sins: and it is an anxious question, worthy of all consideration, whether the long accumulated sin of our Church, with respect to this very Sacrament of Baptism, may not have left us in this age incompetent to deal with this subject in a National Synod: whether, in fact, the disunion, which exists in the English Church, may not as much prevent this, as that which exists in the Church Catholic would prevent the present holding of a General Council. It is, as I have said, a delicate subject to deal with: but let me tell a tale to illustrate my meaning; and let my readers say whether it bears the marks of improbability or exaggeration.

About a hundred years ago, the infant son of a wealthy country gentleman was baptized. As the father was the proprietor of the principal part of the Parish, and

extremely popular among all classes, the event excited considerable interest. The ceremony was performed by the Curate in the drawing-room of the family mansion ; and was immediately followed by a sumptuous entertainment, and an evening of revelry not soon forgotten in the neighbourhood. The domestics, tenants, and parishioners in general, were in some way included in the festivities ; and much license and excess took place, which, *as it was on the occasion of a christening*, was good-naturedly pronounced to be quite excusable. The infant grew into boyhood ; and often heard this festival spoken of in such a way as to make him think that a christening must be indeed a merry scene, and wish that it might be his good fortune some day to see one. But he never did so : though occasionally he saw in his native village a very riotous group, who, in their own way, had been following the example of their betters ; and was told that it was ‘ only a christening party : ’ and then he would think again of his own christening. Meanwhile his education had commenced : and having, by dint of great toil, succeeded in committing to memory much that was incomprehensible to him, he was pronounced ‘ quite perfect in his catechism,’ which he repeated every Sunday for some time afterwards. Occasionally he would wonder what it could all mean : but he never asked, and he was never told. At the age of fourteen, his parents took him to a neighbouring town to be confirmed. The Curate of the Parish called at the house the day before ; and, telling him that he supposed he could say his catechism, presented him at the same time with a ticket for confirmation.

The church was intolerably crowded ; and he was unable to see or hear much that was going on. At one

part of the Service he thought he heard the words "I do" from a few young persons near the Bishop. At length the ceremony was over, and he was glad to escape. In returning home afterwards, he passed several groups of young persons of both sexes, who, like himself, had been taking upon them their baptismal vows; and who were now going back to their respective parishes in a state of much uproar and misbehaviour. He heard it remarked that this was always the case on these occasions. That was all that was said. He had the benefit of a first-rate education; and in his clerical life afterwards (for he became a clergyman) he used to declare that he never heard the subject of Baptism mentioned in any of his lectures at School or the University as one of any serious importance to himself and his fellow pupils. At length he presented himself as a candidate for Holy Orders; and having passed a short examination, in which the subject of Baptism was not referred to, he became the Curate of a large Parish, and in the following year the Incumbent of an important benefice. Soon after entering upon his parochial duties in the former capacity, he was requested, in passing a cottage, to step in 'and name a child,' because it would be inconvenient to the parents to bring it to the church. As the child was in perfect health, he was inclined to demur to the request; but being informed that the Rector always consented to do so when he was asked, and that the children 'at the Hall' were always christened at home, he at once complied. This practice he often found afterwards convenient to himself as well as to his parishioners; and so a great number of the baptisms in the Parish took place in private houses. Sometimes they brought the children to the church; but on no

one occasion during his ministry was any child baptized in the face of the congregation. He once consulted an older clergyman on the propriety of following the direction of the Rubric in this respect; who shook his head, and advised him to consult his own parishioners; and they having declared with one voice that such a thing had never been heard of in their church, and that they had a conscientious objection to all novelties, the idea was abandoned. He visited the parochial school; and having heard the children read a chapter in the Bible, he began to ask them about its meaning; but the master having stated that they were not accustomed to be questioned on their reading, he proceeded to hear the Catechism. This was repeated with tolerable fluency; and though occasionally a few words were omitted or transposed, so as to destroy the whole grammar and sense of the passage, yet, upon the whole, he thought that they could say it as well as he himself could at the same age; and so pronounced the school to be going on well. At the time of Confirmation, he was always considered in the Parish rather strict with the young persons; for his rule was to give no one a ticket who could not repeat the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments; and many of the parents told him that in *their* time there was not so much trouble about being confirmed. In the pulpit he was advised to make his Sermons very simple and practical, not touching upon any deep doctrines; and he endeavoured to do so. On one occasion he copied and preached an excellent plain discourse by an old divine, in which something was said of the spiritual grace of Baptism. But a discreet friend having hinted to him that such subjects were wholly unsuited to the

congregation, and might, moreover, offend some, who were of opinion that there was no spiritual grace in Baptism, he resolved to abstain for the future from touching on the subject; and to that resolution he ever afterwards adhered.

I need not carry the description further. But if this tale represent the system of an age, what fruits of it must we expect to find in the present generation? Was it to be hoped that God, thus offended, would enable the Church to throw off at once all the evils of such a state of ignorance and indifference, pervading every rank, every age, every profession among her members, a state in which one of the holiest and most vital of His Ordinances was systematically desecrated, and a revealed truth blotted out from His Book? Was it to be hoped that He would enable her to awaken at once from such a condition, with the united spirit, the holy reverence, the enlightened and well-instructed judgment, so needed for the task of pronouncing a solemn authoritative sentence in this matter? Was it not much rather to be expected that, instead of the primitive sense of Scripture handed down by the one tradition of the Church, as "a witness and a keeper of "Holy Writ," there should be found among us every diversity of opinion, to which the diversity of men's minds could give birth, propagated, in separate streams of tradition, in families, in parishes, in districts? And that, when the holders of such opinions were challenged to a self-defence, some should seek by every effort to find shelter under the common authority of the Church; others, more boldly, fall back upon their own private interpretations of "the Law and the Testimony," and proclaim that if the Formularies of the Church "speak

“not according” to these interpretations, “there is no light in them?”

Still, it may be asked, what new evil is to be dreaded in seeking, *at once*, a final and authoritative settlement? Much, every way;—the exasperation of party spirit, aggravating the mischief of which it professes to attempt the remedy; the scandal, in the eyes of the country and of all Christendom, of an angry contest carried on under the sanction of public authority; but, above all, that which I would earnestly commend to the deep and serious consideration of my brethren in the Church,—the possible termination of the whole in some mutual compromise, fixing the Faith of the Church of England, perhaps for centuries to come, at some point below the full standard of Catholic Teaching. Should such be the result, our Church will have inflicted on herself a far more grievous wound with her own hand, than could possibly be inflicted on her by all the judgments of all the Law Courts of the kingdom.

Is there, then, nothing to be done? Much may be done; much has been, and is, doing. It is no small advance in the work, that Churchmen have long been exhibiting a growing disposition to “*think* on these things.” Men no longer veil their ignorance under a passing sneer at “the new lights;” no longer, with an heathen indolence and apathy, denounce the “question” as one “of words and names,” and declare that they “will be no judges of such matters.” They feel the importance of the subject now forced upon their attention; they inquire, they study, they reflect. Here is a spirit, which those who are zealous “for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,” must watch and encourage, and, as far as may be, direct. If there be,

as surely there is, a definite Catholic truth on this subject, we may not doubt that God will guide our Church, in His own time, to a proper recognition of it. Yet God's blessings are not to be indolently waited for, but diligently worked for; and in this work all have a field of action open to them. I presume not to speak of those whose station in the Church is above my own; but Presbyters, Deacons, Laymen of every grade, may do something towards the important object of making the Sacrament of Baptism better understood, and restoring it to its proper place in the reverence of the people.

To those among my younger brethren, to whom these pages are especially addressed, I need hardly repeat how important it must necessarily be that they should not seek to enter the Ministry, nor allow themselves to commit their judgments to any conclusion on the subject of this controversy, until they have thoroughly viewed it in all its bearings, and studied it in all its details. For as no evil could be more grievous at this moment for the Church, than that the young candidates for her Ministry should introduce with them any new elements of confusion into our already too troubled and disunited body, so no blessing can be greater for her, than that from this source there should be infused into her system a continual fresh stream of sound, vigorous, and healthy doctrine.

When they have passed the threshold, and have entered on the work of their holy calling, their opportunities of thus doing good will be greatly multiplied and varied.

First in order stands—for the training of a Parish must begin with its little ones—the parochial school. I do not hesitate to say, from a conviction grounded on

considerable experience, that no apportionment of a clergyman's time is more truly valuable to his Parish and to himself, than that of a daily hour to the superintendence of his parish schools. There he is doing God's own work in God's own time: for every wise man, from the inspired king of Israel down to the veriest rationalist that ever experimented on the human mind, has ever held that the first years of life are marked out by Providence as the right opportunity for the inculcation of the first principles of knowledge. There he will find young unprejudiced minds and hearts ready to receive his instructions: while the strong and simple language of the Catechism will leave him nothing to desire as a foundation on which to build them. From that school, if he does his duty in it, no child will pass without a clear knowledge of the truth, with all its important practical consequences, that his baptism was "ordained by Christ Himself as a means whereby he should receive a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness:" that, before that baptism, he was "a child of wrath;" and that, in and by it, he was "made a child of grace," "a child of God," "a member of Christ," and "an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven:" while he will have learned at the same time that he is "bound to believe and to do" all that his godfathers and godmothers then "promised for him;" and that he must "at all times, by diligent prayer, call for God's special grace," "that he may continue" in "the state of salvation," to which he has thus been "called," "unto his life's end." I know that I write what will be distasteful to many of my brethren in the Ministry, and to some of those whom I most respect and love, when I avow that I never could consent to enter a parish school, as the clergyman of that Parish, and for

the sake of officially superintending its religious instruction, unless its rules required that every child, without exception, should be instructed in the Church Catechism. I would never take the risk of lowering in the mind of any one child under my care the reverence, which I desire to impress upon it, for that distinctive teaching of the Church of England, which is one of the essential elements of its constitution, by enabling that child to say that he was educated on a system, in which, *under the sanction and direction of his own Parish Minister*, this important point was left an open question to the parishioners. If the constitution of the school prevented the establishment of such a rule, I should not hesitate to withdraw from it altogether, and to fall back upon my own special province of catechising in the Church.

Another powerful means, which the clergyman has within his own hands, is furnished by the rules of the Church herself respecting the administration of Baptism; that parents, "without great cause and necessity," such "cause to be approved of by the curate," "procure not their children to be baptized at home in their houses;" and that Baptism be administered in the presence of the congregation, "immediately after the last Lesson at "Morning or at Evening Prayer," that "every man present may be put in remembrance of his own profession "made to God in his baptism." As the neglect of these rules has been one of the chief causes of the apathetic ignorance, which even now to a great extent exists on the subject of Baptism, so the restoration of them is ever found (I speak from much personal experience and knowledge), a chief means of removing it. The much-forgotten Ordinance is thus continually kept before the

eyes and thoughts of the people. The solemnity of its public administration at once awakens an interest in it, and serves to impress the minds of parents, of sponsors, and of entire congregations, with a due sense of its importance, and a becoming reverence for its sanctity. I need hardly say that, in the enforcement of these rules, all considerations as to the rank and position of individuals must be utterly disregarded.

But, to turn to a third means, this practice of baptizing during the Public Service will fail of much of its effect, unless it be accompanied, and, where it is to be newly introduced, preceded, by the private and public teaching of the clergyman. I pass over the former, which must of course be regulated by the circumstances of the case, to make a few remarks upon the instructions to be given from the pulpit. As I am speaking to those, who are much younger than myself, and who have not yet entered upon the work of preaching, I shall not be deemed presumptuous or intrusive, if I venture to offer a few suggestions on this head. I speak from experience, derived from my own practice, when I say that it is rarely indeed, if ever, that any subject can be taken for a Sermon, into which the subject of Baptism may not be most fitly and appropriately introduced. Congregations, which have been brought up in an intelligent knowledge of the Church Catechism, and are continually accustomed to hear the language of the Baptismal Service, will soon appreciate, and learn of themselves to anticipate, the connection of Baptism with all the highest topics of Christian Preaching. Nor can the preacher himself feel any difficulty; for the Scriptures, and the Church building upon the Scriptures, take him as it were by the

hand, and supply him with the argument which he seeks. If the sufferings and death of the Saviour are his theme, the Church has founded her prayer, that God will "sanctify water to the mystical washing away of sin," on the fact that his "most dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of our sins, did shed out of His most precious side both water and blood." If the corrupt and lost state of man by nature is his subject, it is by Baptism that we "being by nature born in sin and the children of wrath, are made the children of grace." Is it justification by faith in Christ, on which he would insist? As it is by faith alone that we retain a justified state, so it is by Baptism that we enter into it; and the words of our Creed immediately suggest themselves, "I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins." Is it of the doctrine of sanctification that he would treat? It is by Baptism that we were first "regenerated with the Holy Spirit." Is it of our union with Christ? of our adoption as sons of God? By Baptism we were first made "members of Christ," and "children of God." Is it of salvation? By Baptism we were "called to a state of salvation;" by Baptism we were first made "inheritors of the kingdom of Heaven." Would he remind his hearers of their Christian profession? "Baptism doth represent unto us our profession, which is to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto him; that as he died, and rose again for us, so should we, who are baptized, die from sin, and rise again unto righteousness; continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living." Let me observe, too, that in all our general topics of preaching, whether they

be those of warning or encouragement, whether relating to God's free mercy, or to man's responsibility, such applications of the subject of Baptism, so far from weakening the appeals which we make to our hearers, would only serve to point and impress them the more. I have touched elsewhere ¹ at large upon this point; and will now only add a single illustration of it. Let us suppose the subject of our discourse to be the parable of the prodigal son. The great general topics to be enforced are manifestly — the guilt and misery of sin, the characters of a real repentance, and the unbounded mercy of God towards the penitent. Will these lessons be less effectively enforced, less pointedly and personally applied, if, after reminding every member of our congregation that he was individually "made a child of God" in his baptism, we proceed to point out that the guilt of the prodigal was aggravated by the fact that he was *a son* — that it was a *father's* house from which he "took his journey" into "that far country;" that the bitterest drop in his cup of sorrow was the recollection of an abandoned *home*; the first motive of his repentance his yearnings for its lost delights; and lastly, that the most cheering feature of the whole story is that, when "he arose and came to his father," he found that father more tender towards him than he himself had been towards himself; and that he was received back again, not as a "hired servant," but as a "son," who "had been dead, and was alive again; had been lost, and was found."

And in this our work as clergymen, can we look for no assistance from our lay brethren in the Church?

¹ Page 35.

Surely we may. They may encourage us, by their own cheerful compliance in our introduction, where it may be necessary, of a stricter conformity with the direction of the Church as to the proper time and place for the administration of Baptism. Nay, if we do not ourselves follow the injunctions of the Rubric, they have the right, and the means of enforcing their right of insisting on our doing so. And they may, each in his own sphere, use every effort to separate this holy Ordinance from all those circumstances of worldly festivity, with which it was, and in some places perhaps is still, wont to be accompanied. Let them seriously consider how much a holy Ordinance of God must lose in the minds of men from such associations. Let them think of things as they really are, and call them by their true names. Is feasting and dancing, mirth and revelry even if innocent in itself, a fitting way to mark a parent's gratitude and joy that his child has been "made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven?" Is it a special excuse for an act of intemperance, that it was committed in immediate connection with one of the Sacraments ordained by Christ Himself? Would he desire such proceedings, or think them seemly, on the occasion of that child being admitted for the first time to the *other* Sacrament, the Holy Communion of the Lord's Supper? In truth, such courses as these were the very sins, for which the Apostle St. Paul so solemnly condemned a body of newly-converted heathens. It was not, probably, during the very act of receiving the Lord's Supper, but in the love feast immediately following it, that "one was hungry and another was drunken." This

was their desecration of the Sacrament, by which the apostle told them that they “eat and drink damnation to themselves;” and our Church has applied his very words, as we know, to an unworthy receiving of the Sacrament of Baptism also.

Such then are the various means, by which the minds of men may, under God’s blessing, be brought to a truer appreciation of, and a deeper reverence for, the holy Sacrament of Baptism. Until this is done, I confess that I should entertain more fears than hopes from the assembling of a Synod to define the terms of the doctrine respecting it. To promote this end may perhaps be the very task which God, in his providence, may have assigned to the men of this present age. And we may be well content with our privilege, if we are thus permitted so to prepare the way for a public, formal, and authoritative declaration that, of all the various interpretations, which by possible construction may be given to the formularies of the Reformation, that alone, which has been from the first the doctrine of the Catholic Church, shall henceforth be recognised as the doctrine of the Church of England.

I have now completed my task. If any one shall declare himself offended by what I have said, because it contradicts his own deliberate views and long cherished convictions, I can only reply that *my* views also on this subject have been deliberately formed, and continually strengthened through much study and by long and deep reflection; and that, until I shall see stronger reasons advanced against them than I have hitherto seen, I have nothing to retract, to alter, or to qualify. But if, in my earnest anxiety to persuade the minds of others

of that which has so strongly impressed my own, I have given utterance to any expression which can reasonably be considered harsh and uncharitable towards a Christian brother, I heartily ask pardon for such expression. I declare it unintentional, and wish it unwritten.

C. D.

THE END.

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